Shojo Beat Manga

Tail of the Moon

Story & Art

Rinko Ueda

8

Tail of the Moon

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her great-grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

Usagi and Hanzo continue posing as a married couple during their ninja mission, and Hanzo seems to be jealous of Ranmaru's attentions toward Usagi. Furthermore, it seems that Ranmaru is planning to start a war by attacking all of Iga!

8

Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

Shojo Beat

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Volume 8

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Story Thus Far...

It is the Era of the Warring States. Usagi is a failure as a ninja, but she is a skilled herbalist. She is working hard to qualify as a ninja so she can be the bride of Hattori Hanzo (aka "Shimo no Hanzo")!

Usagi sets out to Azuchi to meet Oda Nobunaga. Hanzo accompanies her in disguise as her husband Hanbei, a samurai from Okazaki. On the way, the two share their feelings and finally feel connected to one another.

As it turns out, Usagi does not get to meet Nobunaga after all. However, she does remember seeing Nobunaga's page, Ranmaru, back in Kouga. Unfortunately, Ranmaru discovers that Usagi is wearing a wig! Usagi is worried that Ranmaru will remember her as a ninja, but he does not seem to notice. Afraid that her engagement to Hanzo will become null again due to her incompetence, Usagi decides to keep this matter a secret from Hanzo.

Just when Usagi and Hanzo decide to go back to Iga, Ranmaru suddenly says, "I'll accompany you to Okazaki"...!

Chapter 50
Tail of the Moon

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

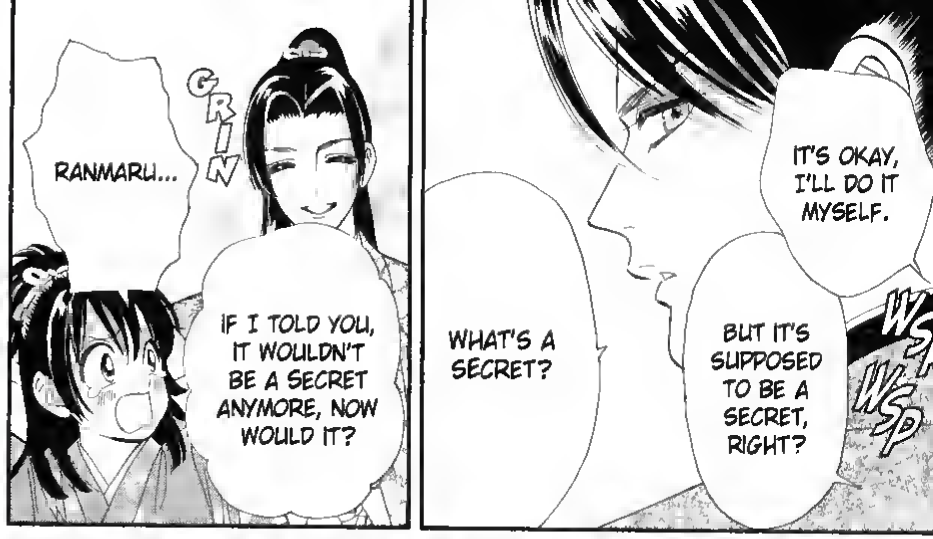
"I WANT TO SEE HANZO DOING MATSUKEN SAMBA!"

-ABARENBO SHOGUN, TOKYO

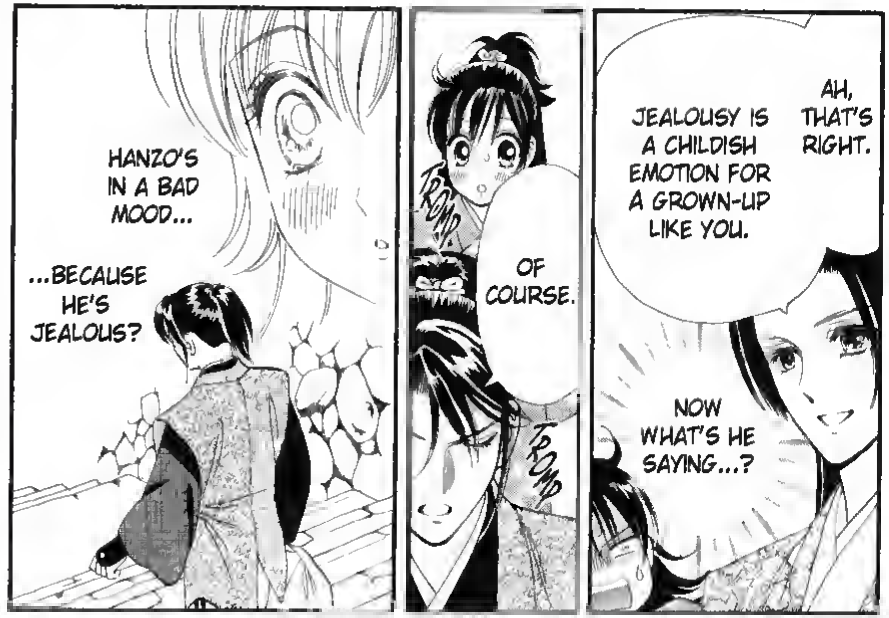
USAGI, PLEASE COME BACK AGAIN TO SEE MOSUKE.
SURE...
I LIKE MOSUKE, BUT I DON'T WANT TO COME BACK TO AZUCHI...
KEE...
MOSUKE, PLEASE CALM DOWN...
KEE...
IF ONLY THINGS WERE DIFFERENT...
SIGH...
I WOULD HAVE GONE STRAIGHT BACK TO IGA...
...AND MARRIED HANZO...
BRUSH
WHAT??
TWITCH
YOUR HAIR WAS TANGLED UP, SO I...

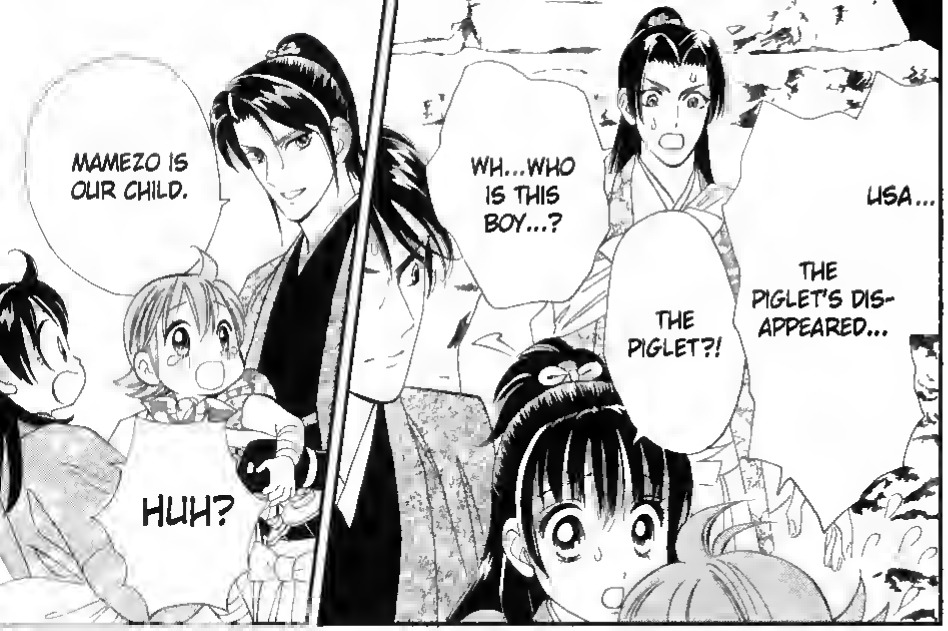
TROMP
TROMP
OH!
RANMARU...
HANZOU WOULD LIKE TO BORROW A HORSE SO THAT HE CAN RETURN TO OKAZAKI FIRST.
DON'T PULL MY HAIR...!!
KEE...!
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
I HAVE TO TELL EVERYBODY AT OKAZAKI ABOUT THIS...
...OR IT'LL CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR LORD IEYASU AS WELL.

WATCH YOUR STEP AS YOU GO DOWN.
USAGI.
BUT THAT'S ...
...BECAUSE HE CARES FOR ME, RIGHT? ♡
HUH?!
USA...
HEE... ♡


RANMARU...
GRIN
IF I TOLD YOU, IT WOULDN'T BE A SECRET ANYMORE, NOW WOULD IT?
WHAT'S A SECRET?
BUT IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SECRET, RIGHT?
IT'S OKAY, I'LL DO IT MYSELF.
WSP
WSP

It's scary
AAAARGH... HANZO'S REALLY FROWNING...
DON'T MESS AROUND WITH A GROWN-UP LIKE ME.
RAN-MARU...


HANZO'S IN A BAD MOOD...
...BECAUSE HE'S JEALOUS?
TROMP
OF COURSE.
TROMP
JEALOUSY IS A CHILDISH EMOTION FOR A GROWN-UP LIKE YOU.
AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
NOW WHAT'S HE SAYING...?


MAMEZO IS OUR CHILD.
HUH?
WH...WHO IS THIS BOY...?
THE PIGLET?!
USA...
THE PIGLET'S DISAPPEARED...

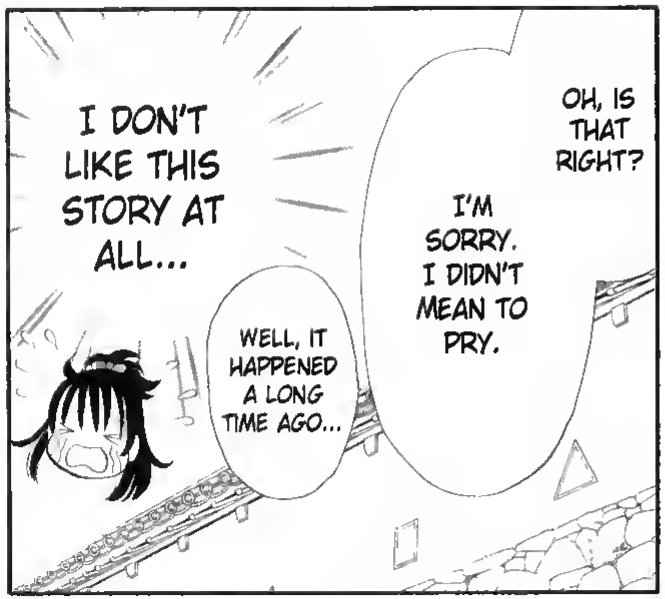
MAMEZO...
MOUTHS
WORDS
DON'T LET HIM FIND OUT THAT YOU'RE A NINJA!

DI...DID HE JUST JUMP OFF THAT ROOF...?!
NOW, MAMEZO...
STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF OUT AND SAY HELLO TO RANMARU.
HE'S A VERY ACTIVE BOY...

PLEASE...
IF HE FINDS OUT THAT YOU'RE A NINJA, WE'LL ALL BE KILLED!!
PLEASE KNOW HOW TO LIP-READ!
MOUTHS
WORDS
STARE

USA...!
SPRUNG
MAMEZO!
HUG
I'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST...!
!!

GREETINGS
Hello, it's Ue-Rin
"Ue-Rin's Manga School" is gradually getting to the most interesting part
My glasses.
I keep misplacing my glasses these days
My glasses
The story continues from the summer of my third year in middle school when I went down to Osaka to meet the editor with my two pieces of manga


I DON'T LIKE THIS STORY AT ALL...
WELL, IT HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO...
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY.
OH, IS THAT RIGHT?

CRNCH
CRNCH
WHEEZE... WHEEZE...
IT'S STILL A LITTLE EARLY, BUT DO YOU WANT TO FIND AN INN TO REST FOR THE DAY?
I...I'M TIRED...
USA, YOUR FACE IS PALE...

GLOWER
FIDGET
FIDGET
M...
...MY...

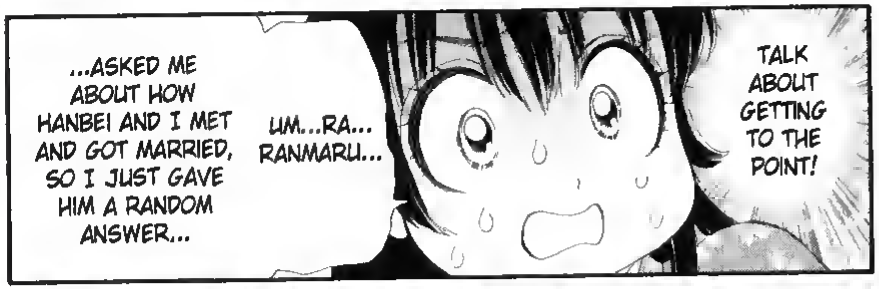
SAY HELLO TO HIM.
BUT HOW DID A CHILD LIKE HIM GET THROUGH THE MAIN GATE...?
HE'S SMALL, SO HE MUST HAVE SLIPPED THROUGH.

SNIFF
...NAME IS...
...MAMEZO...

HUG
UM...
WHEN DID YOU GIVE BIRTH TO HIM, USAGI?!
WAAAARGH!
WELL DONE.
I'M PROUD OF YOU, MAMEZO!!

MY FIRST WIFE DIED RIGHT AFTER SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HIM...
HE'S A CHILD FROM MY PREVIOUS MARRIAGE.
WA-

WHAT IS THIS SECRET THAT RANMARU WAS TALKING ABOUT?


...ASKED ME ABOUT HOW HANBEI AND I MET AND GOT MARRIED, SO I JUST GAVE HIM A RANDOM ANSWER...
UM...RA... RANMARU...
TALK ABOUT GETTING TO THE POINT!

IS THAT REALLY ALL THERE IS TO IT?
THAT'S ALL...
I ALSO TOLD HIM, "DON'T TELL HANBEI THAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT IT"...

BUT, USAGI...
THEN THAT'S FINE.
THIS IS HURTING MY HEART...
RE... REALLY.
THROB
THROB

I'LL SEE YOU LATER THEN...
VERY WELL.
I'LL BRING ALL YOUR DINNERS TO THIS ROOM.
EXHAUSTED...
USA, HANG IN THERE...
INN
SUZUYA

I'm sure the piglet's got its reasons.
OHH-KAY.
What reasons?
BY THE WAY, USAGI...

DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICES.
SHHHK
HUSH
AW, JEEZ...
YOU MUSTN'T LOWER YOUR GUARD UNTIL THE ASSIGNMENT IS FINISHED.
BUT MY PIGLET...
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SHOW UP SO SUDDENLY, MAMEZO?

USAGI...
AREN'T YOU HUNGRY?

I'M TOO TIRED...
THAT'S NOT GOOD.
I'VE GOT SOME MEDICINE, SO WHY DON'T YOU TAKE SOME?

NAH...
IT'S NOT THAT BAD...
FATHER...
WHAT'S THIS?

THAT'S A TYPE OF FISH CALLED "EEL."
Sigh..

BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT I SAW RANMARU IN KOUGA!
I'M REALLY REALLY SORRY...!!

THROB
OHH...
PLEASE DON'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME.

I'M SO SORRY, HANZO!!
SNIFF
FORGIVE ME FOR LYING TO YOU...!
USA, ARE YOU CRYING?
MAMEZO...
YOU MUST PRACTICE CALLING ME "FATHER."
SNIFF

THE SECRET RANMARU WAS REFERRING TO...
D...
...DADDY?
B-BUMP
B-BUMP
NOT "DADDY"...
..."FATHER."
...IS ABOUT MY WIG...

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
...NOTHING!
ER...

WHISPER
PLEASE DROP BY MY ROOM LATER.
HUH?

DROP BY HIS ROOM...?
MAMEZO, THIS EEL'S DELICIOUS, ISN'T IT?
UH-HUH! ♡

I DON'T WANT TO KEEP ANY MORE SECRETS FROM HANZO...
OOH, THIS IS SO GOOD...

SEE YOU LATER...
USAGI, DON'T LEAVE THIS ROOM UNTIL WE COME BACK.
HUH?
WHY?!
PHEW

MAMEZO.
LET'S GO AND TAKE A BATH.
YES, FATHER.

DON'T TALK TO HIM UNLESS IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!!
Keep your wig on.
KRK
Ow!
RANMARU IS A DANGEROUS PERSON.

SNEAK

I FEEL LIKE I'M DOING SOMETHING REALLY BAD...
IT...
...IT'S ME, USAGI...
SNEAK
SNEAK

I CAN'T...
I'M SORRY, HANZO...

OKAY...
UNDER-STAND?
I WANT TO FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, BUT...

HERE YOU ARE, USAGI.
THIS IS A WESTERN SWEET CALLED CASTELLA.
I GUESS... I TRULY DO LOVE HIM, DON'T I?
PLEASE WAIT HERE THEN.
TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
...A STRONGER FEELING THAN "LIKE," ISN'T IT?
LOVE'S...

OH, NO...
...THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
I'VE ONLY GOT ONE, SO DON'T TELL THE OTHERS ABOUT IT.
...IS THAT ALL?
UM...
SWEET THINGS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR BODY WHEN YOU'RE TIRED.

THIS WAS WHY HE TOLD ME TO COME?!
...
SHHHK
GOOD NIGHT.
WELL, THAT'S ALL.

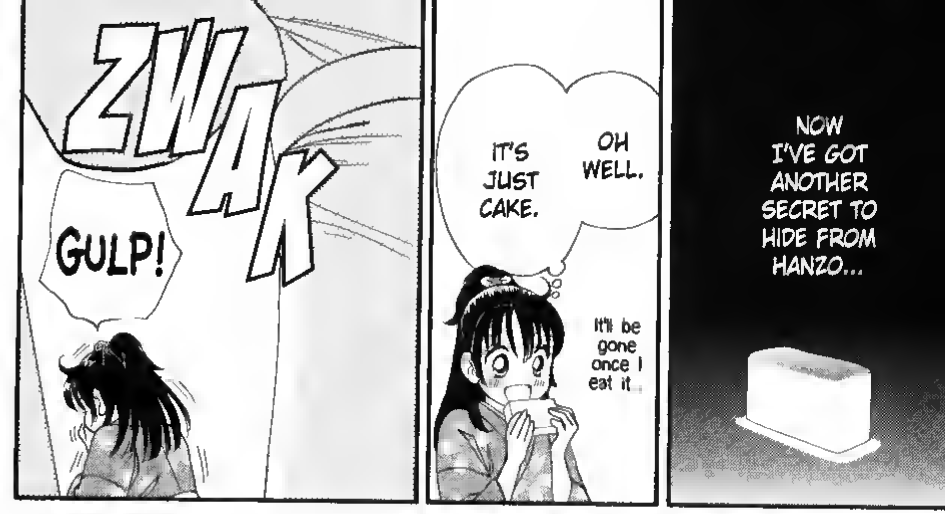
WHAT...
...SO I CAN'T ENTER A MAN'S ROOM AT NIGHT!!
I...I'M HANBEI'S WIFE...

ZWK
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
PLEASE COME IN...
WHATEVER I'M HERE FOR, LET'S TAKE CARE OF IT OUT HERE!

USAGI...

LOVE?!
YOU REALLY LOVE HANBEI FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART, DON'T YOU?

WHAT...
YOU BROKE YOUR PROMISE...
YOU MET WITH RANMARU, DIDN'T YOU?
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NOT TO HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME!


ZWAK
GULP!
IT'S JUST CAKE.
OH WELL.
It'll be gone once I eat it.
NOW I'VE GOT ANOTHER SECRET TO HIDE FROM HANZO...

USA, DO YOU WANT SOME WATER?!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
COUGH!
THUMP THUMP
MY...
...MY THROA...

IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL.
WHAT KIND OF SWEET?
JU... JUST A SWEET...
WHAT WERE YOU EATING BEHIND MY BACK?
CHUG CHUG

THE ONE THAT I LIKE IS YOU, HANZO.
I'VE ALWAYS TOLD YOU HOW I FELT.
WHY WON'T YOU BELIEVE ME?
I'VE ALWAYS...
...LOVED YOU, HANZO...
SILENCE!

REALLY!
HE JUST GAVE ME A SWEET, THAT'S ALL...
IS THAT REALLY ALL?!
...
YOU THINK THERE'S SOMETHING BETWEEN ME AND RANMARU...?!
WHY?

WHISPER
I'M HANBEI RIGHT NOW.
DON'T FORGET THAT.
I'M SORRY I DOUBTED YOU...

HUH...

MY BODY FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO MELT AWAY...
HANZO'S BREATH FEELS SO HOT...
FROM THE FIRST TIME I MET YOU...
...I KNEW THAT YOU WERE HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE WITH ME.

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AND BENKEI TOGETHER!"

-RYOKO, KYOTO

TWO HANDSOME-LOOKING MEN! BUT I STILL THINK HANZO'S THE BEST. ♥
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
But you're a lot taller than me, Benkei
THAT'S BECAUSE THE ARTIST DREW US TO HER TASTE!
WE DON'T LOOK THAT DIFFERENT EVEN THOUGH WE EXCHANGED CLOTHES.

MA... MAMEZO!!
USA, I'M SO GLAD YOU GOT TO KISS HANZO...
UH-HUH!!
OH!
VEEN

WHOA.
NOT IN FRONT OF A CHILD...
YOU IDIOT.
MMMM
HANZO, LET'S CONTINUE... ♡

HUH?
DRIBBLE..
USA, YOU'VE GOT A NOSE-BLEED!!

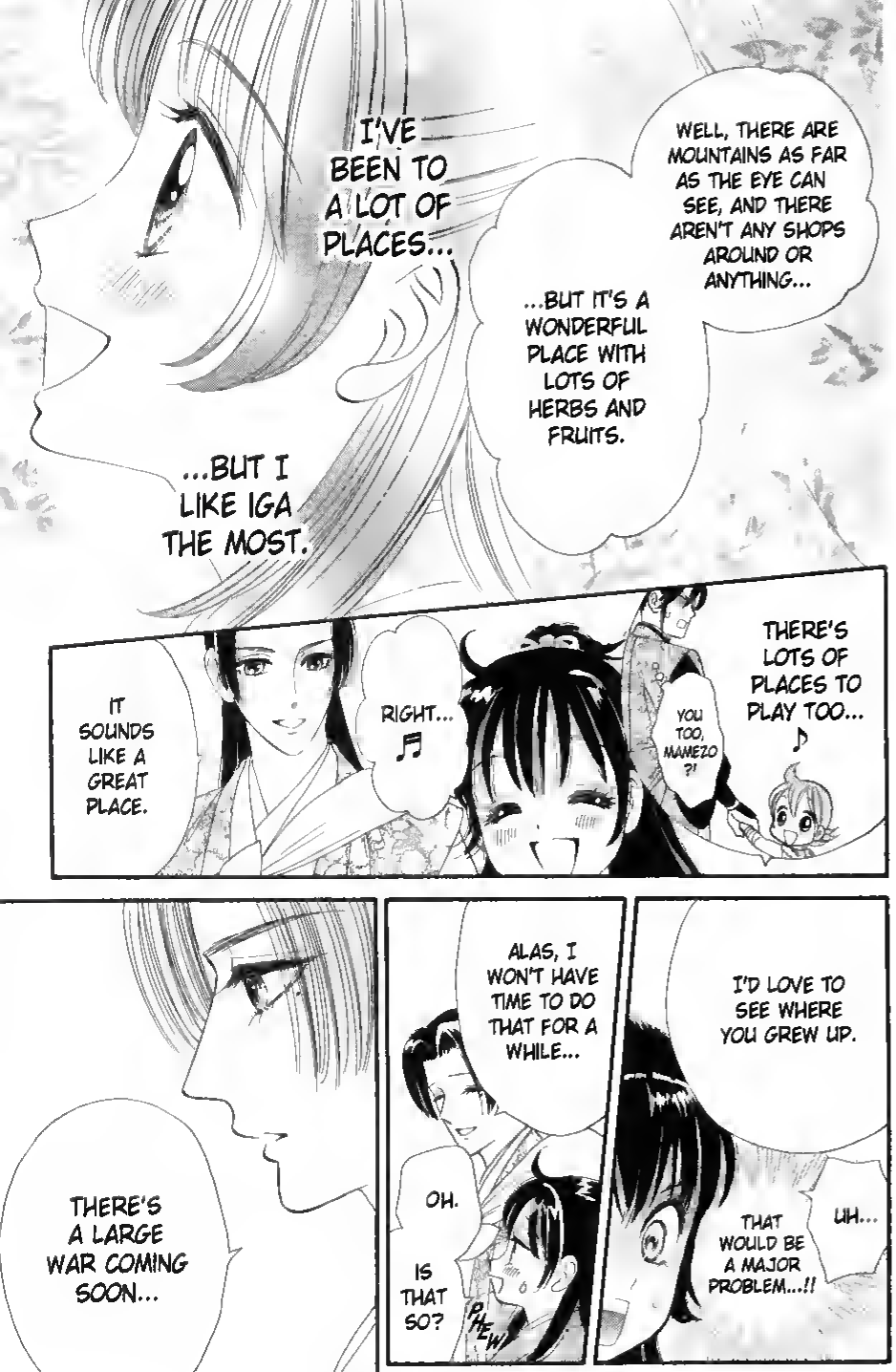
MELT ME...
...SOME MORE...

Get ready
IT'S TIME TO CUDDLE TOGETHER.
USAGI...
...IS SOMETHING EVEN MORE BREATH-TAKING THAN KISSING, ISN'T IT??
A CONJUGAL ACT...!!

!!
ZORT

DON'T STAIN THE ROOM!!
USA'S NOSEBLEED WON'T STOP...
WAAARGH
ONCE WE GET BACK TO IGA AND GET MARRIED, THEN WE'LL... ♡

FOR GOD'S SAKE...
URGH...
PAT PAT
IF YOU KEEP ENDING UP LIKE THIS WITH JUST A KISS...
...YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO PERFORM ANY CONJUGAL ACTS.
WHAT'S A CONJUGAL ACT?
YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW YET, MAMEZO.
!!


I'VE BEEN TO A LOT OF PLACES...
...BUT I LIKE IGA THE MOST.
WELL, THERE ARE MOUNTAINS AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE, AND THERE AREN'T ANY SHOPS AROUND OR ANYTHING...
...BUT IT'S A WONDERFUL PLACE WITH LOTS OF HERBS AND FRUITS.
IT SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT PLACE.
RIGHT... ♬
YOU TOO, MANEZO ?!
THERE'S LOTS OF PLACES TO PLAY TOO... ♪
THERE'S A LARGE WAR COMING SOON...
ALAS, I WON'T HAVE TIME TO DO THAT FOR A WHILE...
OH. IS THAT SO?
PHEW
I'D LOVE TO SEE WHERE YOU GREW UP.
UH...
THAT WOULD BE A MAJOR PROBLEM...!!

THAT'S MEDICINE ?!
IF YOU BOIL IT IN WATER, THE RESULTING BREW HELPS RELIEVE ANEMIA.
YUP... IT'S THE ROOT OF THE PLANT RUBIA AKANE...
SHOULD WE WALK SLOWER?
I'LL TAKE SOME MEDICINE...
I...I'M FINE...
TROMP
TROMP
...YOU DON'T LOOK WELL.
USAGI...
SLUMP
I'M JUST A LITTLE ANEMIC...

HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
NO... USAGI IS...
COULD IT BE THAT YOU GREW UP IN THE MOUNTAINS, USAGI?
YOU SEEM TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT HERBS.
I GUESS ANY MOUNTAIN VILLAGE IS PRETTY MUCH THE SAME...
WHAT KIND OF...?
WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS IT?
I... I GREW UP IN THE MOUNTAINS, BUT RIGHT BY OKAZAKI...
OH...
YOU IDIOT.

THE EXACT DATE HASN'T BEEN DECIDED YET, BUT...
AND WHEN IS THAT ATTACK GOING TO TAKE PLACE?
NO...
...IT'LL PROBABLY OCCUR AROUND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR...
THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR...
WE'VE GOT LESS THAN THREE MONTHS?!
A WAR!!
WAAARGH
I DON'T WANT A WAR...
IT'S NOTHING FOR YOU TO CRY ABOUT, MAMEZO.
...FOR TALKING ABOUT IT IN FRONT OF YOUR CHILD...
I'M SORRY...

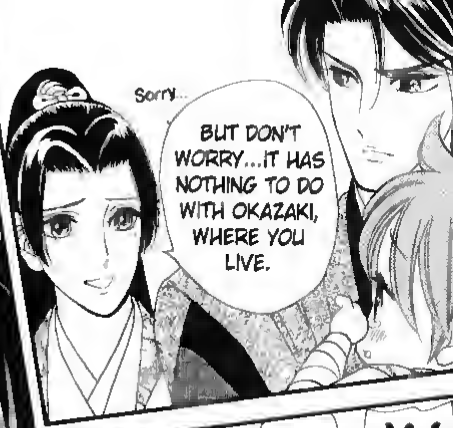
WHAT DID HE JUST SAY?
WAR...?
THE ATTACK ON IGA.
I'M ON MY WAY TO OKAZAKI TO REQUEST LORD IEYASU'S COOPERATION WITH US FOR THE WAR...

WHAT?!
WE'VE RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT THERE IS GOING TO BE AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON LORD NOBUNAGA!!
BEARDED HANZO!!
WHAT-EVER IS THE MATTER?
USE THIS HORSE TO RETURN TO AZUCHI!!
I WILL!
PLEASE HAND LORD NOBUNAGA'S LETTER TO LORD IEYASU FOR ME!
VERY WELL.
AN ASSAS-SINATION ATTEMPT ON NOBUNAGA ?!

WHAT...
SWUP
PLEASE TAKE CARE, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...

...SAME HERE... SA...
HANBEI, USAGI...
...IT WAS ONLY A SHORT TIME, BUT THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE DELIGHTFUL JOURNEY.

IF HE FINDS OUT NOW, EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE WILL BE WASTED!!
THERE, THERE...
IT'S OKAY...

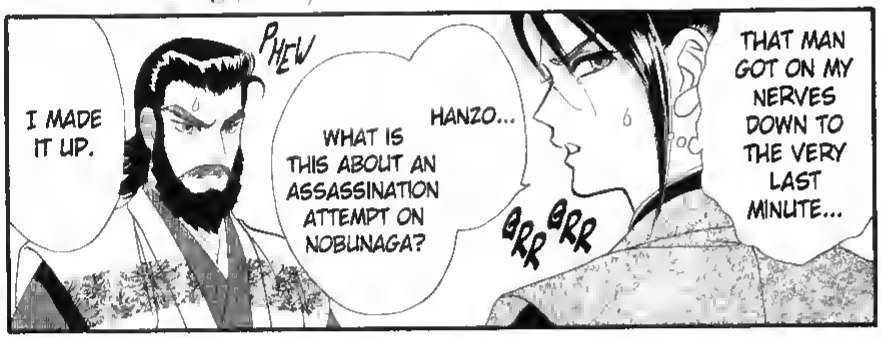

Sorry...
BUT DON'T WORRY...IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH OKAZAKI, WHERE YOU LIVE.

WAAARGH
MAMEZO...
COME HERE!
I MUSTN'T SEEM UPSET!!

WE'RE ALMOST AT OKAZAKI CASTLE.
I HAVE TO ACT CALM LIKE HANZO.

YOU MUST RETURN TO AZUCHI IMMEDIATELY!!
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP
RANMARU!

HYAH!
HE REALLY SURPRISED ME THERE...
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
SEE YOU!!
HUP
WESTERN ...?!


I MADE IT UP.
PHEW
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON NOBUNAGA?
HANZO...
GRR GRR
THAT MAN GOT ON MY NERVES DOWN TO THE VERY LAST MINUTE...

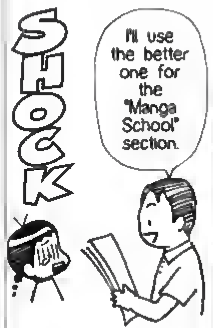
SORRY!
RUSTLE
YOU MADE IT UP?!

OH.
SNAP

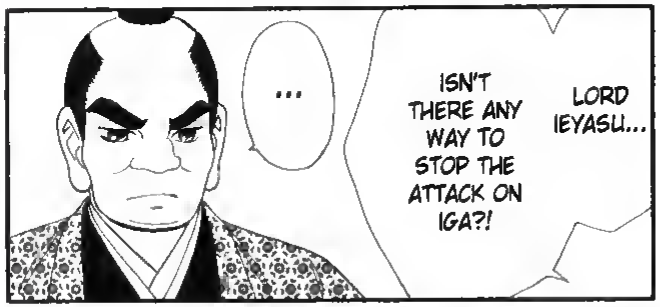
WHA... WHAT...
IT'S A WESTERN WAY OF SAYING GOODBYE.

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (12)

I had this wily scheme of "It's going to be great if both of my works got accepted for the magazine!" But the words that came out of the editor that I met were



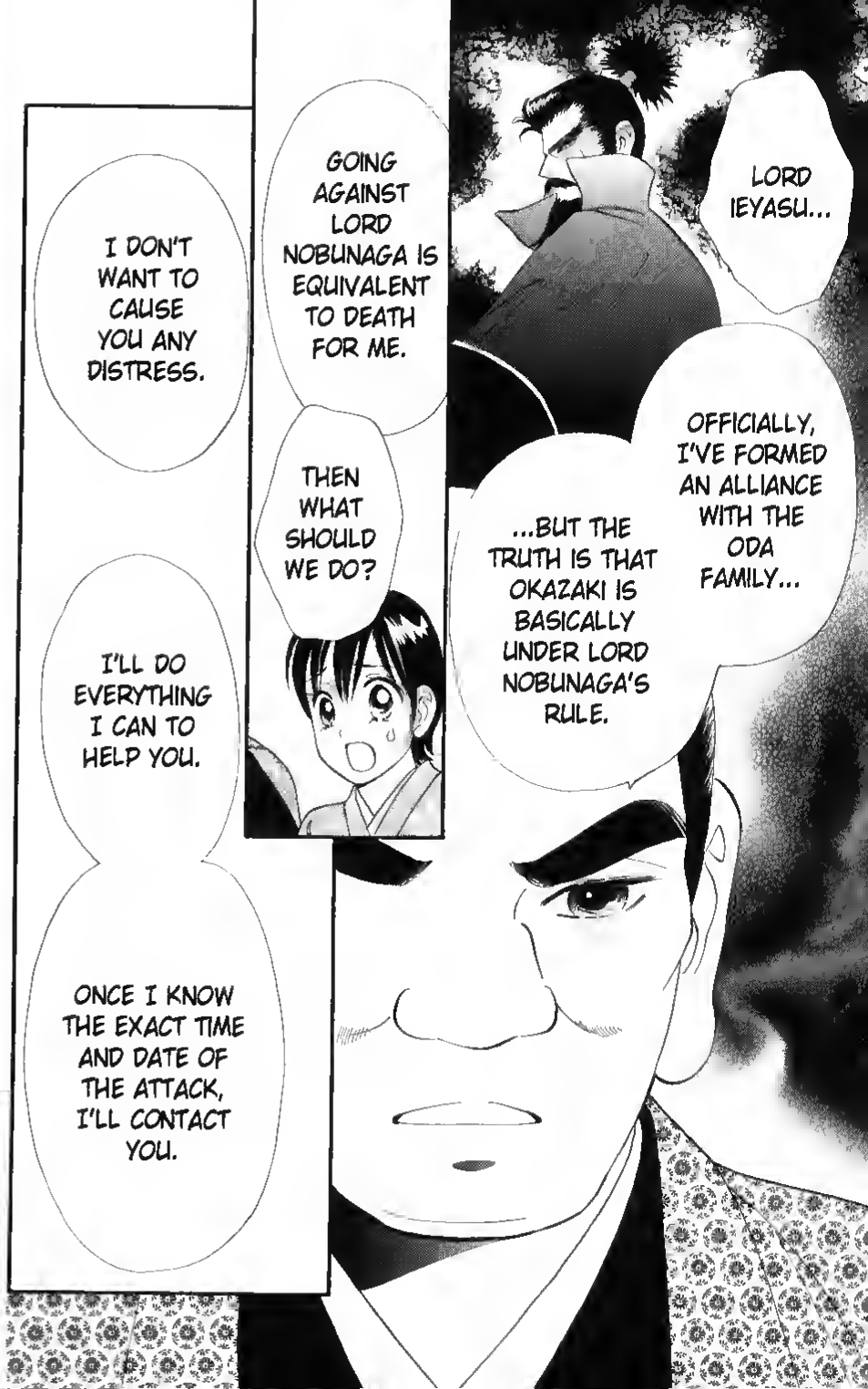
And so, the editor took the one he liked back with him to Tokyo
Now that I think about it, he made the right decision. Plus, the other piece that didn't get taken was a good exercise for me, so the work wasn't wasted



LET'S GO TO LORD IEYASU FIRST...
THIS LETTER FROM LORD NOBUNAGA SAYS THAT THEY'LL BE ATTACKING IGA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR...
HMM.
TOKUGAWA IEYASU

EVEN IF YOU'RE UP AGAINST A LARGE ARMY, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PLAN TWO OR THREE STEPS AHEAD OF THEM AND FIND A WAY TO EVADE THE ATTACK.
PREPARE YOURSELVES AS BEST YOU CAN.

HANZO...
REALLY, IT'S NOTHING.
BY THE WAY...
I'M EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR BENEVOLENCE, LORD IEYASU!!
NOT AT ALL.
I'M POWER-LESS...
I'M SORRY...
LORD IEYASU...

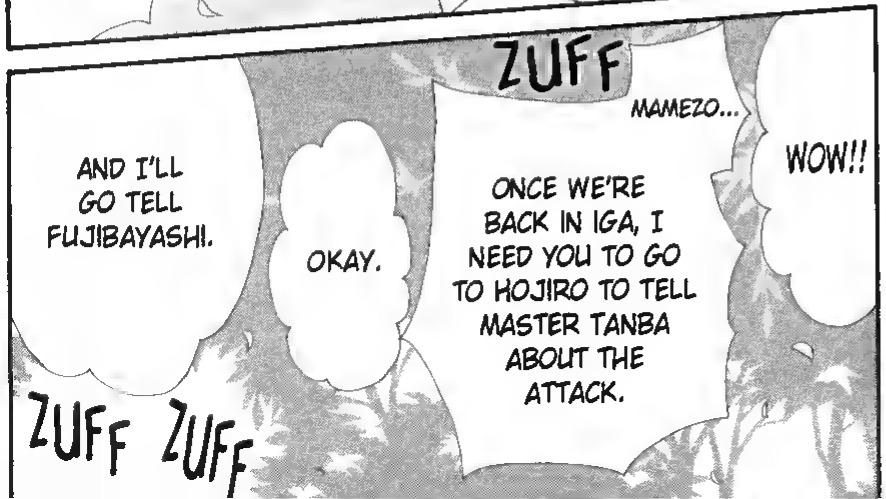

LORD IEYASU...
OFFICIALLY, I'VE FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH THE ODA FAMILY...
...BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT OKAZAKI IS BASICALLY UNDER LORD NOBUNAGA'S RULE.
GOING AGAINST LORD NOBUNAGA IS EQUIVALENT TO DEATH FOR ME.
THEN WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE YOU ANY DISTRESS.
I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP YOU.
ONCE I KNOW THE EXACT TIME AND DATE OF THE ATTACK, I'LL CONTACT YOU.

...HAVE YOU TWO GOTTEN MARRIED?
NO, NOT YET...
REALLY...
HANZO OF IGA...
PLEASE MARRY USAGI AS SOON AS YOU CAN.
I...I INTEND TO DO SO...
DON'T WORRY.
WE'RE GETTING MARRIED AS SOON AS WE RETURN TO IGA!
I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR THAT...
HEE HEE... ♡

LORD IEYASU, THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING...
USAGI...
IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN, YOU CAN ALWAYS COME TO MY PLACE.
BUT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN!!
THANK YOU.
MY LORD...
I TRULY APOLOGIZE FOR LEAVING YOU AGAIN.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, HANZOU.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I'M SORRY HE'S SUCH A FOOLISH SON...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR KIND WORDS.

WOOSH
WOOSH
OOOH!
YOU'RE SO FAST!

WE'LL BE THERE IN THE MORNING!
AT THIS RATE, WE'LL BE BACK IN IGA BY NOON TOMORROW!!


ZUFF
MAMEZO...
WOW!!
AND I'LL GO TELL FUJIBAYASHI.
OKAY.
ONCE WE'RE BACK IN IGA, I NEED YOU TO GO TO HOJIRO TO TELL MASTER TANBA ABOUT THE ATTACK.
ZUFF ZUFF

SHE SEEMS SO CARE-FREE...
ISN'T THAT GOOD?
...WILL BE WHEN I COME TO TELL YOU THAT WE'VE SAFELY FENDED OFF THE ATTACK.
THE NEXT TIME I'M HERE...
SITUATIONS TEND TO WORK OUT BETTER WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR HEAD UP RATHER THAN DOWN.

THANK YOU, LORD IEYASU...
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE GOOD NEWS.
TUP

I BELIEVE YOU, HANZO...
AND I'LL GO FIND MASTER...
WELL THEN, I'M OFF TO FUJIBAYASHI'S PLACE.
YES...
I BELIEVE YOU.
ZUFF
ZUFF
ONCE WE GET BACK, YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST, USAGI.
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I CAN DO TOO...
!!

WE MUST DISCUSS DEFENSE MEASURES BETWEEN THE THREE LEADING FAMILIES OF IGA AND COME UP WITH SOMETHING BY THE END OF THE DAY!
IT'S GOING TO BE BUSY...
THE WEDDING...
DON'T WORRY.
WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO THE WEDDING?
I PROMISE YOU I'LL FEND OFF THE ATTACK ON IGA NO MATTER WHAT.
HUH?
BA-BUMP

IT'S AS IF A WAR IS GOING TO BREAK OUT ANY MINUTE NOW...
OPEN THE GATE.
MASTER HANZO'S BACK!!

THE VILLAGE FORTIFICATIONS HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH...!
MASTER HANZO!!
I'M BACK!

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 52

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI AND RYO TOGETHER!"

-AOI, KANAGAWA PREFECTURE

I'M SURE HANZO WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEE ME IN IT.
♡
IT WAS A LITTLE (OK, VERY) HEAVY THOUGH...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY SO HARD...
I...I WANT HANZO TO SEE ME IN THIS JUNI-HITOE...
HUFF
HUFF
USA, IT LOOKS REALLY HEAVY...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

WE MUST BUILD THE PERFECT FORTRESS AND KEEP OUR GUARD UP.
THE FORTIFICATIONS ARE ALMOST COMPLETE AS YOU ORDERED, MASTER HANZO!
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE'RE ALREADY GETTING READY FOR BATTLE?
YOU'VE ALL DONE WELL!

WE'VE COME BACK TO IGA AT LAST...
WE MUST STOP NOBUNAGA'S ATTACK ON IGA AT ALL COSTS!
...TO TALK TO HANZO ABOUT THE WEDDING...
...BUT THIS IS NO TIME...

WHAT A...
...GRAND-LOOKING STRONGHOLD!!

FOR SAMURAI OF THE NORTHERN LANDS, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE...
...BUT DO YOU THINK A SKILLED TACTICIAN LIKE NOBUNAGA WOULD WAGE WAR IN THE WINTER WHEN IT'S SNOWING?
WAIT A MINUTE.
THE LORDS IN THE KINKI REGION WHO ARE UNDER THE CONTROL OF NOBUNAGA WILL LIKELY TAKE PART IN THE ATTACK AS WELL...
YOU'RE RIGHT...
SHOCK
HUH?
...BECAUSE THEIR REAL MOTIVE IS TO ATTACK US BY THE END OF THIS YEAR BEFORE WE'VE HAD A CHANCE TO FULLY PREPARE FOR BATTLE?
WHAT IF THIS RANMARU TOLD YOU THAT THE ATTACK ON IGA WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR ON PURPOSE...

WHY DID YOU BRING THE CAT...?
SO THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR...
SOUTH IGA LEADER MOMOCHI TANBA
PURR PURR
WE MADE IT THROUGH THE LAST TWO ATTACKS...
...BUT THIS TIME, THEY'RE DEFINITELY GOING TO BRING A HUGE ARMY WITH THEM.
NORTH IGA LEADER NAGATO FUJI-BAYASHI
I FEEL THAT EVERYBODY IN IGA MUST WORK TOGETHER IN ORDER TO FEND OFF THIS ATTACK.

USAGI, SINCE YOU'VE...
...FULFILLED YOUR ASSIGNMENT AT AZUCHI...
...I QUALIFY YOU AS A NINJA!!
REALLY?!
GR...
...GREAT-GRANDPA, I...
OH, I ALMOST FORGOT!

ARE YOU SAYING THAT RANMARU LIED TO THEM?!
IF HE SAW THROUGH HANZO AND USAGI'S DISGUISES AND FIGURED OUT THEY'RE NINJA, IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE.
EEEP
HE DID NOT SEE THROUGH OUR DISGUISES!
IF HE HAD, WE WOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK ALIVE, RIGHT?
WELL, YOU DO HAVE A POINT THERE, BUT...
IF RANMARU REMEMBERED PASSING BY ME IN KOUGA, THEN HE MAY HAVE KNOWN THAT WE'RE NINJA...
MAYBE I SHOULD TELL THEM ABOUT IT...?

HANZO...?
SHHH
YOU GO AND PLAY OUTSIDE, MAMEZO.
MIIKO IS MY FRIEND.
MEOW
MASTER TANBA...
...WHAT IS THAT CAT...
MAYBE WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE THAT KISS?!
ALONE IN A ROOM WITH HANZO!!
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.
TROMP
TROMP
MMM...
GO AHEAD! ♡
FOLLOW ME.
THERE ARE STAIRS INSIDE THE CLOSET?!
I TOLD YOU TO KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN!
SHUT
HUH?

I'M A QUALIFIED NINJA?!
YOU HAVE TO WORK HARD AS A NINJA FROM NOW ON.
I'll do my best!
TH...
WELL DONE, USA...
THANK YOU, GREAT-GRANDPA!!
HMM?
I WANT YOU TO STAY, USAGI.
OKAY!!
I'LL GO AND MAKE A CELEBRATORY FEAST...
WAIT.
HANZO...
CAN WE GET MARRIED RIGHT AWAY?!
Stop it, people are watching.
THE WEDDING WILL OCCUR AFTER ALL OF THIS IS SETTLED.

ALL THE ANCESTRAL TREASURES AND SECRET SCROLLS ARE KEPT HERE.
THROB
"MY WIFE."

IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO ME, IT WILL BE YOUR JOB TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.

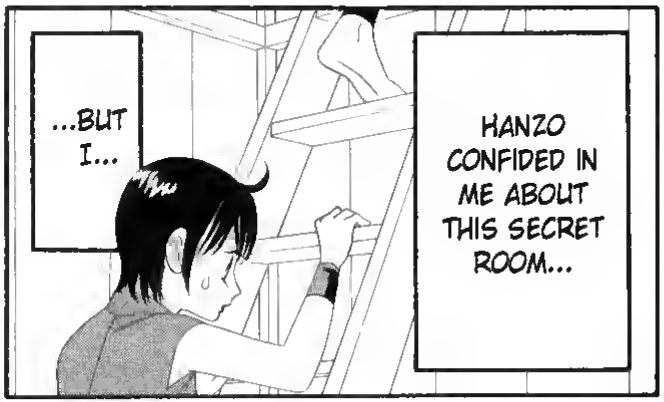
I WON'T DIE AND LEAVE YOU BEHIND.
I'M JUST SAYING "IF"!!
SHUSH!
HANZO, DON'T DIE!!

YOU DECIDED TO TELL ME ABOUT SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROOM...
THIS IS A SECRET ROOM THAT NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT, EVEN THE PEOPLE WHO WORK HERE.
OOH...
I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS AN ATTIC...
Watch your head
NO ONE...?
KAMI NO HANZOU KNOWS ABOUT IT...
...BUT THIS ROOM IS ONLY USED BY THE LEADERS OF OUR CLAN.
YOU'RE THE WOMAN WHO IS GOING TO BECOME MY WIFE, USAGI.

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA 13

During the meeting in Osaka, I got to learn about different tools and techniques from other girls who were there, so it was a really enlightening experience for me

Since I didn't tell my own friends about drawing manga, meeting people who also drew manga was a great inspiration for me. And so, I continued to draw and send manga and hardly studied for my exams after that. The reason I was still able to attend school without missing classes was because my house was kitty-corner to my school, so I was able to make it in time even if I left my house after the school bell rang



I WILL SURVIVE THE COMING HARDSHIPS...
...AND MAKE YOU HAPPY, USAGI.
I'M ALREADY HAPPY ENOUGH... ♡
DO NOT TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS ROOM.
OKAY.
IT'S A SECRET BETWEEN US. ♡

BOW
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T TELL YOU UNTIL NOW!!
SCOLD ME, HANZO!!
IT'S ALL MY FAULT...
...SO SCOLD ME...
YOU NEVER CEASE TO SURPRISE ME, USAGI.

...WHEN I WAS KIDNAPPED BY HIKARU...
...I PASSED BY RANMARU IN KOUGA!!
USAGI...?
I'VE BEEN HIDING THIS FROM YOU ALL THIS TIME, BUT...
ACTUALLY...
...SO I'VE BEEN PRETENDING NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
RANMARU DIDN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER ME...

GREAT-GRANDPA?!
IT'S JUST AS I THOUGHT. RANMARU KNEW THAT YOU'RE NINJA!!

IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT HE KNEW ABOUT IT...
IT'S SO OBVIOUS.
IF USAGI REMEMBERED, THEN HE DEFINITELY REMEMBERED AS WELL.

IT ONLY PROVES THAT HE DIDN'T CAPTURE YOU TWO BECAUSE HE WAS GOING TO USE YOU.
YOU MAY BE RIGHT...
HANZO...
THEREFORE, I REVOKE YOUR QUALIFICATION AS A NINJA, USAGI.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD FOR YOU TO TELL ME THAT.
THIS INFORMATION WILL HELP ME COME UP WITH OUR NEXT MOVE.
HUH...
RAISE YOUR HEAD.
ARE...
...AREN'T YOU GOING TO SCOLD ME?
HANZO...
YOU SURE HAVE SOFTENED UP.
HANZO!!

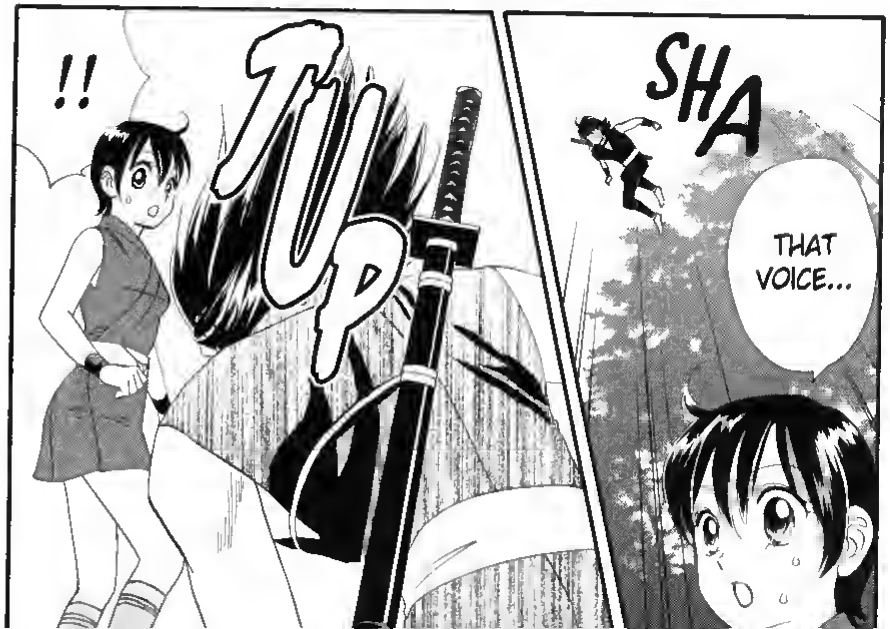
I'LL GO TOO...
NO.
YOU SHOULD STAY HERE AND PRACTICE YOUR NINJUTSU SO THAT YOU CAN RECEIVE YOUR QUALIFICATION.
GOOD!
I'LL GET MY SCOUTS TO WORK WITH YOU.
RECEIVE MY QUALIFICATION...

WHAAAAT?!
YOU TOO, HANZO. YOU SHOULDN'T LOWER YOUR GUARD JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE SMOOCHED USAGI.
GULP
HOW DID YOU...
YOU FAILED YOUR ASSIGNMENT, SO I'M LEFT WITH NO OTHER CHOICE.
I'LL GO TO AZUCHI!
MY WEDDING WITH HANZO JUST KEEPS GETTING TOUGHER AND TOUGHER...
BLUSH
BLUSH
AH!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN MA-MEZO.
Hanzo and Usagi
SIGH
I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO TO AZUCHI MYSELF AND CHECK UP ON RANMARU...

HEY.
GOEMON!!
YOU CAN MOVE AROUND ALREADY?!
YAAAY!
YUP!
I TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIM.
OF COURSE.

WHOA, WHOA, WHOA!
SCREECH
TMP TMP TMP
YEEEARGH...
IF I DON'T GET MY QUALIFICATION, I WON'T BE ABLE TO MARRY HANZO.

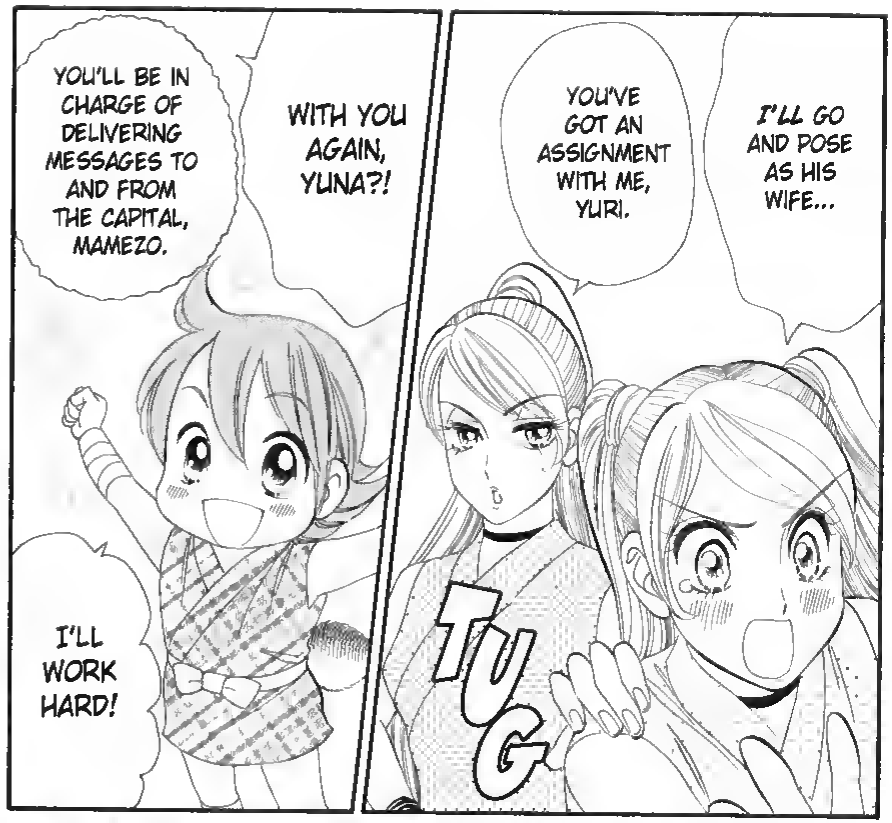
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE WORKING HARD.
WELL, YOU HAVE BEEN AWAY FOR A WHILE...
Even though I broke it, it's already made a comeback
THIS TREE SURE DOES GROW FAST...


!!
TUP
SHA
THAT VOICE...

YOU TWO CAN SNEAK INTO THE CAPITAL POSING AS HUSBAND AND WIFE.
I'M GOING TOO?!
THE CAPITAL, HUH... THAT'S GONNA BE TOUGH.
TAKE USAGI WITH YOU ON THIS ASSIGN-MENT.
WITH GOEMON THIS TIME...?!
HUSBAND AND WIFE... ♪

YURI!!
HEARD YOUR QUALIFICATION GOT REVOKED.
HOW DID YOU...?
YOU JUST NEED TO TRY AGAIN, THAT'S ALL.
OOH..
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, GOEMON.
MASTER... WHAT'S MY NEXT ASSIGNMENT?
ACK!
I WANT YOU TO BECOME A KUSA IN THE CAPITAL...
WHAT'S A "KUSA"?
NINJA WHO LIVE AS NATIVES OF A CERTAIN PLACE IN ORDER TO GATHER INFORMATION.
...AND PREVENT THE ODA ARMY FROM PROCURING WEAPONS.
Duuuh Idiot.

I'VE GOT TO DO MY BEST...
O... OKAY!
LET'S GIVE IT OUR BEST, USAGI. ♪
...SO THAT I CAN MARRY HANZO!!


YOU'LL BE IN CHARGE OF DELIVERING MESSAGES TO AND FROM THE CAPITAL, MAMEZO.
WITH YOU AGAIN, YUNA?!
I'LL WORK HARD!
YOU'VE GOT AN ASSIGNMENT WITH ME, YURI.
I'LL GO AND POSE AS HIS WIFE...
TUG

HUH?
ALREADY ?!
LET'S GO THEN.
REALLY?!
USAGI...
IF YOU FULFILL THIS ASSIGNMENT, I'LL REALLY GIVE YOU YOUR QUALIFICATION.

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AS GUITAR SAMURAI!"

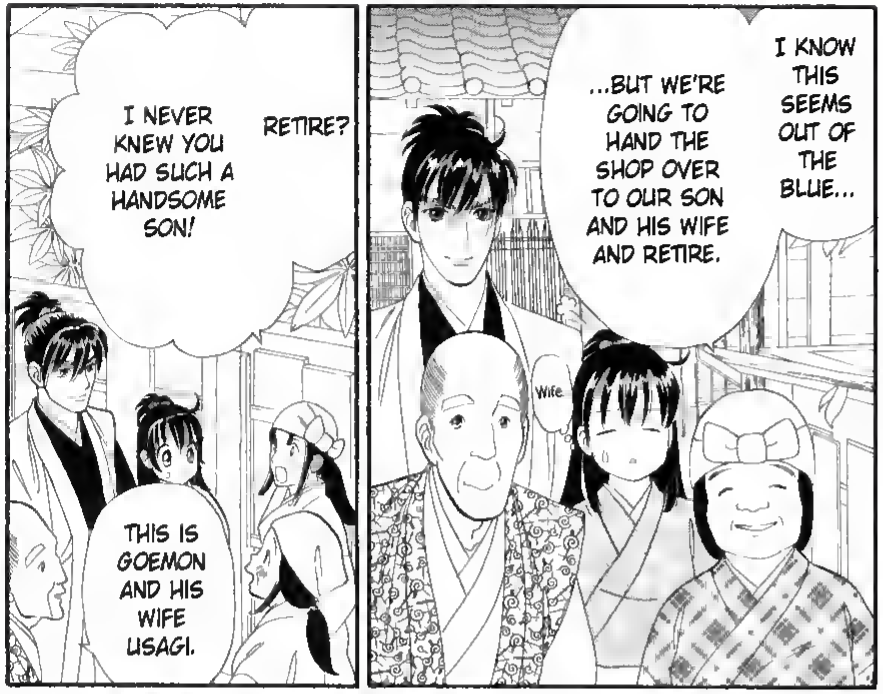
-YOKO HATA, KOUCHI PREFECTURE

HANZO LOOKS HANDSOME NO MATTER WHAT HE WEARS! ISN'T THAT WHAT PEOPLE SAY?
WELL THEN... I GUESS... NINJA SLASH ...?
I DON'T LOOK ANY DIFFERENT THAN USUAL...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

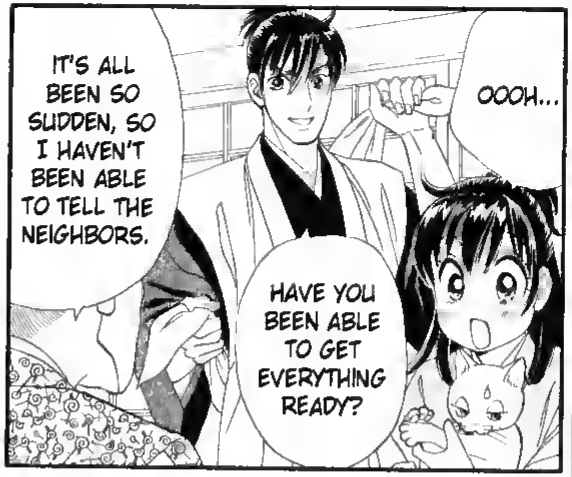
...UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, I WOULD HAVE MARRIED HANZO BY NOW...
BUT...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
IF WE CAN'T STOP THE ATTACK ON IGA SOMEHOW, WE'LL ALL BE DEAD BEFORE WE EVEN HAVE THAT WEDDING OF YOURS!!
OH.
THEN PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!!
I DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN...
I KNOW, BUT...
YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE DEPRESSED!!

DEPRESSED
SHFF
SHFF
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME TO THE CAPITAL, RIGHT?
TMP
TMP
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!!
THE FATE OF IGA DEPENDS ON THIS ASSIGNMENT, YOU KNOW!
SMACK
OW!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M POSING AS GOEMON'S WIFE THIS TIME...
GOEMON...
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO AT THE CAPITAL, ANYWAY?
WELL...
...A CAT.
CAT ?!
WELCOME!
A REST ...?!
WE'LL HAVE TEA AND DUMPLINGS FOR TWO...
...AND...
LET'S TAKE A REST AT THIS TEAHOUSE FIRST.
SHOCK
A CAT...
BUT THIS IS A TEA-HOUSE!!
YOU'LL FIND THE CAT ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
Feel free to go up there.
WHAAAAT?
THEY SELL CATS TOO?!
MEORW
MEORW
HUH?
MIIKO?!
...USAGI.
THAT CAT IS MIIKO'S BROTHER, MYAAKO...
TWITCH
MEORW
MYAAKO, HUH?
...HEY!
HOW COME YOU KNOW MY NAME?!
WE'RE NINJA FROM IGA TOO.


I NEVER KNEW YOU HAD SUCH A HANDSOME SON!
RETIRE?
THIS IS GOEMON AND HIS WIFE USAGI.
I KNOW THIS SEEMS OUT OF THE BLUE...
...BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAND THE SHOP OVER TO OUR SON AND HIS WIFE AND RETIRE.
Wife

IF YOU EVER NEED A HAND WITH ANYTHING...
...PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ASK ME.
BLUSH
I...I'LL GO AND BUY DUMPLINGS AT YOUR PLACE EVERY DAY. ♡
ME TOO. ♡
I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.


IT'S ALL BEEN SO SUDDEN, SO I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TELL THE NEIGHBORS.
HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO GET EVERYTHING READY?
OOOH...

HUH? WHERE?
LET'S GO, USAGI.
THEN LET'S TAKE CARE OF THAT NOW.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU NEED?
HEY THERE.
GOOD EVENING.

NINJA ?!
...GATHERING INFORMATION ON THIS PLACE.
WE'RE KUSA WORKING UNDER MASTER TANBA, AND WE'VE BEEN LIVING IN THE CAPITAL FOR A LONG TIME...
"CAT" IS A CODE WE NINJA USE TO IDENTIFY EACH OTHER.

DON'T WORRY, USAGI'S REALLY GOOD AT MAKING DUMPLINGS AND TEA.
ALL WE'RE GOING TO DO IS TAKE CARE OF A DUMPLING SHOP?
YOU GET TO HEAR A LOT OF RUMORS AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAPITAL FROM THE CUSTOMERS, SO IT'S BEST IF THE SHOP IS THRIVING.
I SEE...
PLEASE KEEP THE SHOP'S REPUTATION UP.
AND TAKE CARE OF MYAAKO FOR US TOO.
WE WILL!

BY THE WAY, WHEN DID YOU TWO GET MARRIED?
HUH?!
YOU'RE HIS FIANCÉE, AREN'T YOU?
OUR ENGAGEMENT WAS CANCELLED.
USAGI'S NOW THE BRIDE-ELECT OF SEGACHI'S HATTORI HANZO.
BUT WHY?!
YOU TOLD ME IT WAS YOUR DREAM TO MARRY USAGI...
WELL...
...A LOT HAPPENED.
ANYWAY, YOU HAVEN'T FINISHED TEACHING US ALL THE PROCEDURES FOR THIS SHOP YET, SO...
OH, RIGHT.
PEOPLE FROM THE INN LISTED ON THIS ACCOUNT BOOK WILL COME TO BUY DUMPLINGS EVERY MORNING, SO YOU HAVE TO PREPARE THEM BEFORE THE SUN RISES.

IF HE'S PREPARING FOR A LARGE WAR, THEN IT'S A POSSIBILITY.
THEN DOESN'T THAT MEAN RANMARU MAY COME WITH HIM?!
I HAVE TO CHANGE MY HAIRSTYLE!
My kimono too
WHAT'S WITH YOU ALL OF A SUDDEN?
YOU JUST NEED TO MAKE DUMPLINGS AND SELL THEM.
I WONDER IF I CAN DO IT?
YOU HAVE TO!!
ACK!
NOBUNAGA'S TACTIC IS TOTAL ANNIHILATION...

WELL, I'VE GOTTEN A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF THINGS INSIDE THE HOUSE...
OWW...!
HISSSSS...
SCRATCH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MYAAKO SCRATCHED ME...
JUST LICK IT OR SOMETHING. IT'LL GET BETTER SOON.
OWW!
FWAP

I'M GOING TO INVESTIGATE THE SITUATION REGARDING NOBUNAGA'S WEAPONS TOMORROW.
LICK
LICK
YOU'RE SO MEAN, GOEMON...

NOBUNAGA'S AT AZUCHI, ISN'T HE?
HE OFTEN HOLDS HIS BUSINESS MEETINGS AT HONNOJI, WHICH IS NEAR HERE.
WAIT...DO YOU MEAN NOBUNAGA'S GOING TO BE CLOSE BY?!

I'M SCARED...
IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET, HAS IT?

I'M GOING TO SLEEP LIKE THIS...!
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET OFF ME?!
I CAN'T WASH MY BACK.
SCRUB SCRUB
TCH.
MNCH MNCH

ANNIHILATION...?
WHEN HE BURNED ENRYAKUJI TO THE GROUND...
...HE MASSACRED EVERYBODY, EVEN THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.
MASSACRE...
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE, THEN DO YOUR BEST ON THIS ASSIGNMENT!
HEY!
GLOMP
I'M SCARED...

GOEMON HASN'T BEEN HIMSELF TODAY...
I WONDER IF HE'S STRESSED OUT BECAUSE OF THIS ASSIGN-MENT?
SNIFF SNIFF
JUST HURRY UP AND GO TO SLEEP!!
NOBUNAGA MAY ACTUALLY BE NEARBY...
I'M SO SCARED...
HANZO...

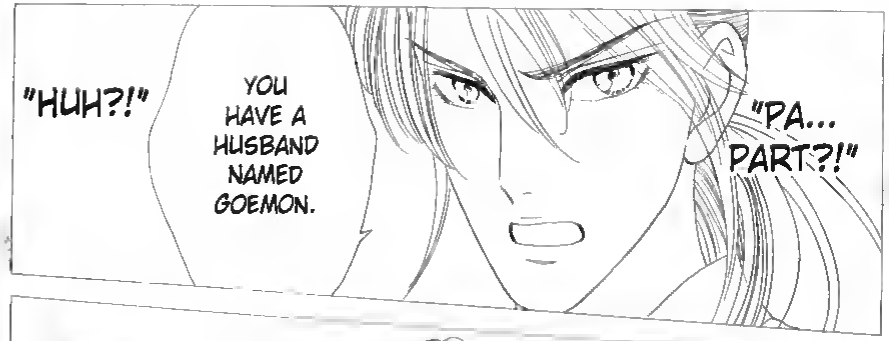
AAARGH!
GET OFF!!
WHY...?
YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME HANZO'S WIFE, AREN'T YOU?
STOP CLINGING TO ME!!
BUT WE'RE ONLY PRETENDING, AREN'T WE?!
THAT'S TRUE BUT...
...I'M YOUR WIFE AT THE MOMENT, GOEMON...

THE SHOP!!
THANK GOD IT'S ONLY A DREAM...
I'M LEAVING NOW, SO TAKE CARE OF THE SHOP.
A DREAM ...?
FLIP
WAKE UP!!
NGHH...
FWUP
FWUP

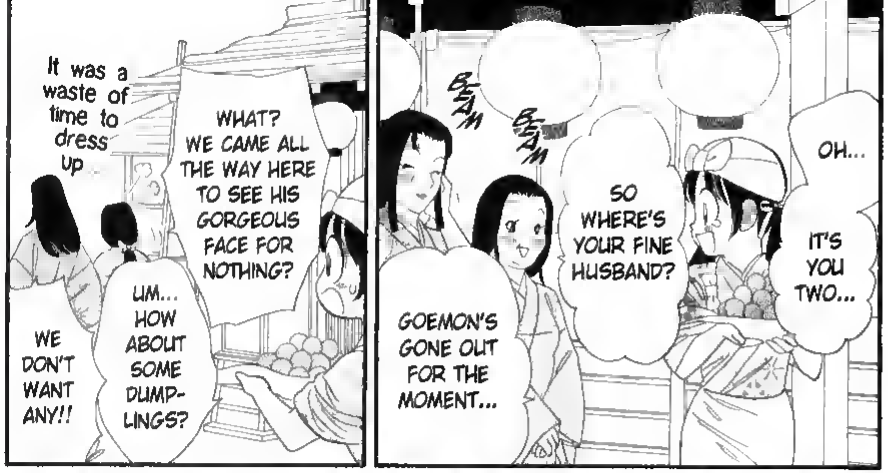
I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING MYSELF?!
DASH
WAARGH
DASH
OPEN THE SHOP...
GOOD MORNING.
MAKE THE DUMPLINGS AND THE TEA...
KWSHD KWSHD

"HANZO."
"OH..."

I'M GOING TO PART WITH YOU.
"HANZO..."
USAGI.


"HUH?!"
YOU HAVE A HUSBAND NAMED GOEMON.
"PA... PART?!"

"WAIT, HANZO."
GOODBYE, USAGI.
"BUT I'M ONLY PRETENDING TO BE GOEMON'S WIFE..."
WAKE UP, USAGI!!
Gooood
bye
bye
bye
WAIT...


It was a waste of time to dress up
WHAT? WE CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO SEE HIS GORGEOUS FACE FOR NOTHING?
WE DON'T WANT ANY!!
UM... HOW ABOUT SOME DUMP-LINGS?
GOEMON'S GONE OUT FOR THE MOMENT...
SO WHERE'S YOUR FINE HUSBAND?
OH...
IT'S YOU TWO...

...AT LEAST ONE DUMPLING?
CAN'T YOU BUY...

It wouldn't hurt... to buy just one.

ARE YOU OPEN?
MY ASSIGN-MENT...
"PLEASE KEEP THE SHOP'S REPUTATION UP."
"PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE CUSTOMERS SAY."
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SELL EVEN ONE DUMPLING SINCE THIS MORNING...
DUMPLINGS
Shop

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. ♪
One, two, three
WHAT...
ARE THOSE DUMPLINGS ?!

I'D LIKE TO HAVE THIRTY OF THE USUAL DUMPLINGS. ANYWAY...
THIRTY?!

GOO... GOOD MORNING!
ARE YOU THE NEW SHOPKEEPER?
YOU LOOK REALLY YOUNG. CAN YOU HANDLE THIS PLACE?

TH...THIS IS THE ONLY TYPE OF DUMPLING I MAKE...
I DIDN'T ASK FOR THOSE SIMPLE COUNTRY-STYLE DUMPLINGS! WHERE ARE THE USUAL ONES?!
UM...

HAVE YOU GOTTEN USED TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS YET?
GOOD MORNING.
WAIT...!

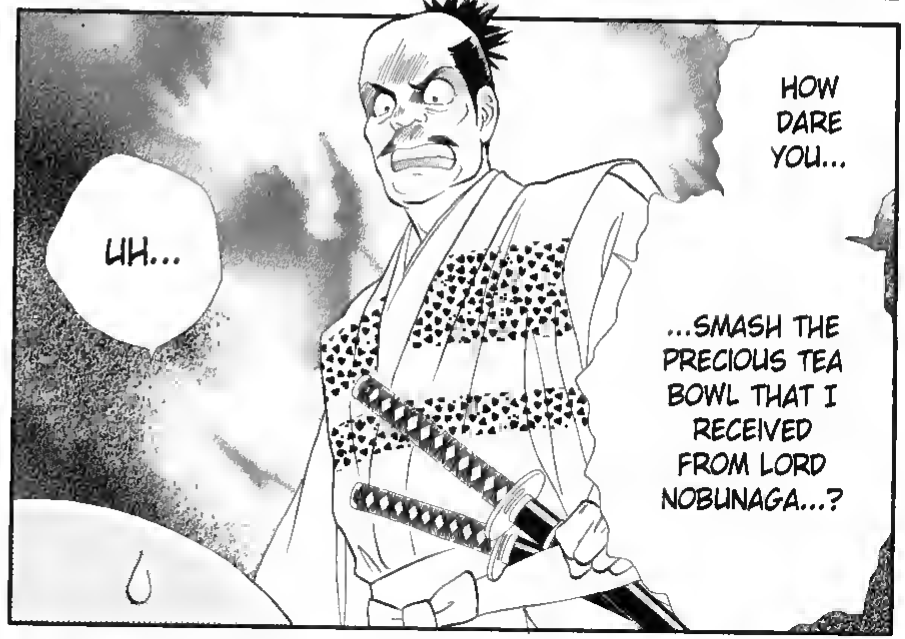
FORGET IT! I'LL BUY THEM AT ANOTHER SHOP!!
H... HEY...
SHUP

WELCOME!!
TEA FOR TWO.
SURE THING!
COMING RIGHT UP!!
I HAVE TO WORK HARD SO THAT THEY'LL LIKE THIS SHOP. ♪
OOPS.
CRASH
THIS SHOP IS RATHER NOISY...
LOOK AT THIS WONDERFUL TEA BOWL.
OOH...
IT SHOULD BE YOUR FAMILY TREASURE FROM NOW ON.
I KNOW. ♪
HUFF HUFF
SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING.

TEE HEE ♡
IT'S ON THE HOUSE. ♡
I DIDN'T ORDER ANY DUMPLINGS.
HERE YOU ARE. ♡
PLOP
SPLASH SPLASH
HEY, THIS IS...
LET ME...
...POUR THE TEA FOR YOU.
IT'S HOT!
WHOA.

NOBU...?
SHAM
IT'S UN-
FORGIVABLE
!!
AAAAARGH

OW
OW
I'M SO
SORRY...
HOW...
!!
SHATTER


UH...
HOW
DARE
YOU...
...SMASH THE
PRECIOUS TEA
BOWL THAT I
RECEIVED
FROM LORD
NOBUNAGA...?

IF YOU SAY SO, RANMARU...
MISS...
ARE YOU OKAY?
RANMARU?!

YOU...
YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE ONE IN A FIX IF YOU CAUSE TROUBLE IN THE CAPITAL, SADANARI.
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
PLEASE STOP THAT.
GRAB
BUT...
...THIS GIRL BROKE THE TEA BOWL I RECEIVED FROM LORD NOBUNAGA...
ANYTHING THAT HAS A SHAPE WILL PERISH SOMEDAY.
AND I'M SURE THIS GIRL DIDN'T BREAK THE BOWL ON PURPOSE, RIGHT?
THAT VOICE...

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI AS A MAID!"

-AKIHABARA, YAMANASHI PREFECTURE

STOP TALKING LIKE THAT.
!!
SCREECH
SCREECH
SCREECH
I...
I'VE NEVER MET YOU BEFORE!!
LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.
AAAGH... I'VE GOT NO OTHER CHOICE NOW...
WHY ARE YOU HIDING YOUR FACE?
I'M... TOO... SHY...
...YOU... YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL...
BECAUSE...
SCREECH
SCREECH

IS THAT SO?
YOU WERE TALKING TO US WITH YOUR MOUTH WIDE OPEN A MINUTE AGO...
WHY YOU...
PAY FOR IT?!
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THE TEA BOWL!!

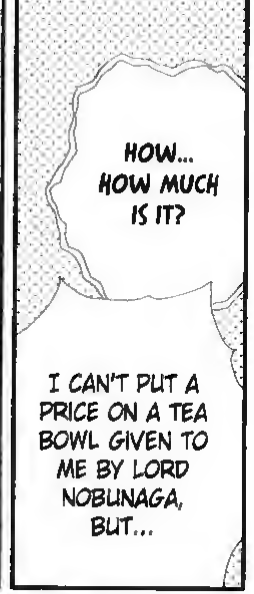
WHY IS RANMARU HERE?!
MISS...
...HAVE WE MET SOMEWHERE BEFORE?

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (14)

Back then, I had extracurricular activities, so I would swim three kilometers after school every day. I also attended cram school twice a week and was even learning calligraphy and piano during the weekends. I had to cut my sleeping time in order to draw my manga. Basically, the time I had to draw manga was very precious to me.

I hadn't made my debut yet, but I had an editor who would take a look at my manga and fix certain areas before it was submitted to a magazine. This happened to be a very stressful thing for me.

And the reason for that was



ODA CLAN RETAINER MITSUHIDE AKECHI
MITSUHIDE!!
I CAN HEAR YOUR VOICE FROM OUTSIDE, SADANARI.
OHH..
THIS GIRL BROKE THE TEA BOWL THAT I RECEIVED FROM LORD NOBUNAGA!

WHAT HAPPENED?!
I WAS SO SCARED...
GOEMON...

SO...
THIS RANMARU GUY DIDN'T NOTICE IT WAS YOU, DID HE?
I'M STILL SCARED...
AND WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET OFF ME?!
DON'T BE SUCH A BABY.
OWW!
I WILL.
YOU SHOULD STAY INSIDE STARTING TO-MORROW, USAGI.
RANMARU THINKS I'M HANBEI'S WIFE FROM OKAZAKI!!

YOU JUST NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL NEXT TIME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR HELPING ME!!
BOW

OW.
BANG

I...I'M ALIVE...
HAHAHA, IT'S NOTHING.
ARE YOU OKAY, MITSUHIDE?

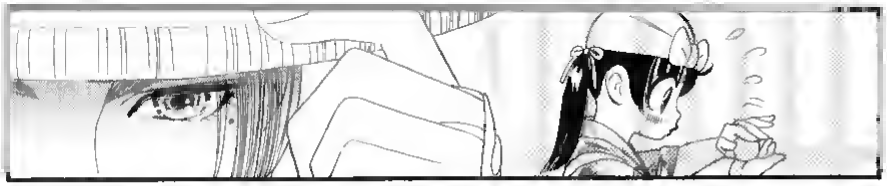
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?!
IF RANMARU'S HERE AT THE CAPITAL, THEN...!!
I CAN'T REST EASY YET!!

I GUESS THERE ARE SOME NICE PEOPLE AMONG NOBUNAGA'S VASSALS...
OH!

I TOOK A LOOK AT HONNOJI...
...BUT IT'S HEAVILY GUARDED WITH NOBUNAGA THERE, SO I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SNEAK IN THAT EASILY.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO USE THE DUMPLING SHOP.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME, RIGHT?
NOT EVEN ONE... YET...
YOU COULDN'T SELL ANY?!
WE'RE GOING TO GO IN THERE...?
THAT'S OUR JOB, ISN'T IT?
HEY, SO HOW MANY DUMPLINGS DID YOU SELL TODAY?

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU, GOEMON.
WHY ARE YOU SO COLD TO ME?!
HAVE I DONE SOMETHING WRONG?!
THEN WHY...
WAAAAH...
NO YOU HAVEN'T, USAGI...
NOBUNAGA IS AT HONNOJI AS WE SPEAK!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO TALK ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.

LET'S GIVE IT A TRY.
THIS DUMPLING SHOP SEEMS REALLY POPULAR.



THEY'LL BE HERE IN A MINUTE...
WHERE ARE OUR DUMPLINGS ?
COMING!
WAITER, COULD YOU REFILL MY TEA?

WE'RE CURRENTLY HANDING OUT NUMBERED TICKETS, SO PLEASE WAIT UNTIL YOUR NUMBER IS CALLED!
MA'AM...
OH, NO.
AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO'S CUTTING?!
HEY!
STOP CUTTING IN LINE.

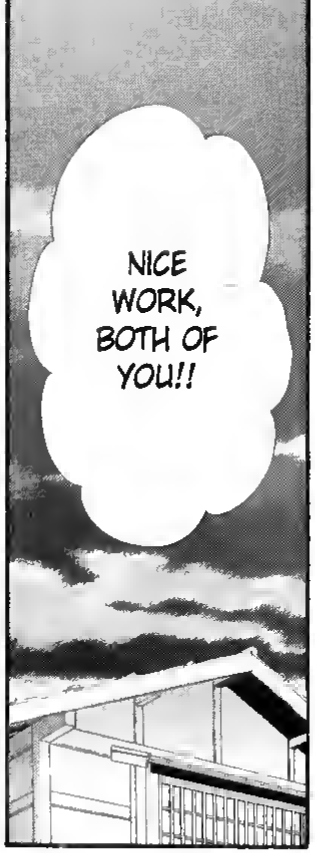
HEY, PRETTY GIRL, WHY DON'T YOU DROP BY AND HAVE ONE?
STEP RIGHT UP, STEP RIGHT UP!
THE DUMPLING SHOP "USAGI" JUST OPENED, SO WE'RE HAVING A SALE TODAY.

ME TOO... ♡
TMP TMP TMP
I'LL BUY ONE...

I'M GLAD YOU'RE SELLING SO MANY, BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S MAKING THEM, Y'KNOW!
USAGI, ARE THE DUMPLINGS READY YET?
ROLL ROLL
SWIP

YES, OF COURSE!
THIS DUMPLING DOESN'T LOOK VERY GOOD, BUT IT TASTES GREAT.
COULD YOU HAVE TEN OF THEM WRAPPED UP FOR ME TO TAKE HOME?
The tea's delicious too

YOU DID, YOU DID!
DID I DO A GOOD JOB?
AT THIS RATE, WE MIGHT EVEN START GETTING CUSTOMERS FROM HONNOJI.
I'M EX-HAUSTED...

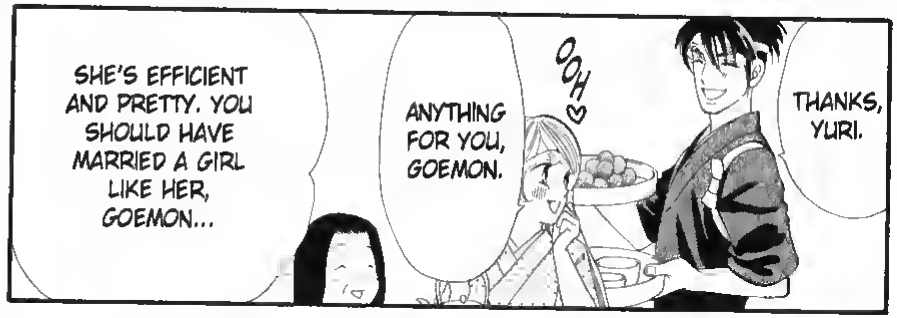

NICE WORK, BOTH OF YOU!!

WITH YURI AROUND, I FEEL A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE BEING AWAY FROM THE SHOP.
WHAT...

WHAAAT?
I'M GOING TO BE LEAVING FOR SAKAI RIGHT AWAY, SO I NEED YOU TWO TO TAKE CARE OF THE SHOP FOR A WHILE.

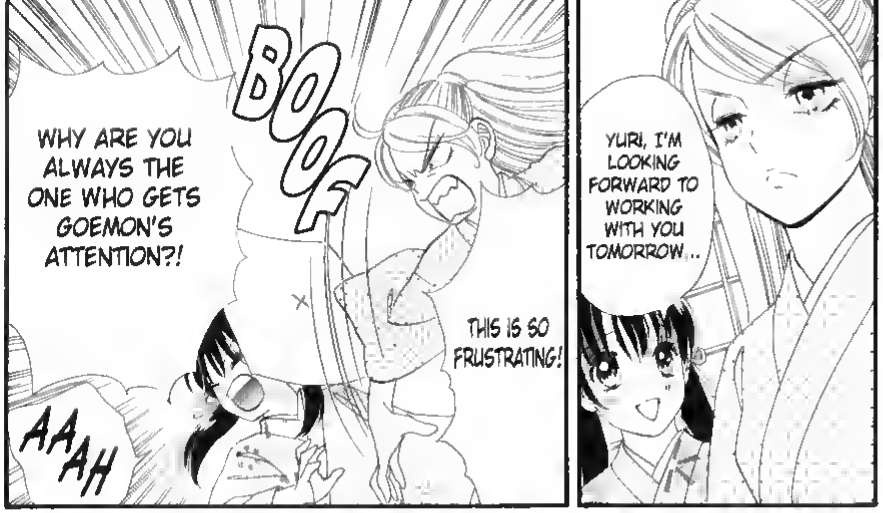
HERE YOU ARE.
PLEASE LINE UP WITHOUT BLOCKING THE WAY OF THE OTHER CUSTOMERS.
LET ME REFILL YOUR TEA.

YURI?!
I THOUGHT YOU COULD USE SOME HELP. ♡

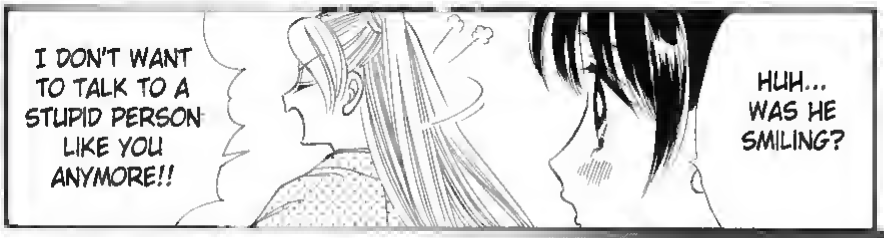

SHE'S EFFICIENT AND PRETTY. YOU SHOULD HAVE MARRIED A GIRL LIKE HER, GOEMON...
ANYTHING FOR YOU, GOEMON.
OOH ♡
THANKS, YURI.

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!
HA HA HA
WELL, IT'S NOT THAT EASY...

HUFF HUFF
THEY SEEM TO BE HAVING A LOT OF FUN OUT THERE...
HA HAHAHA

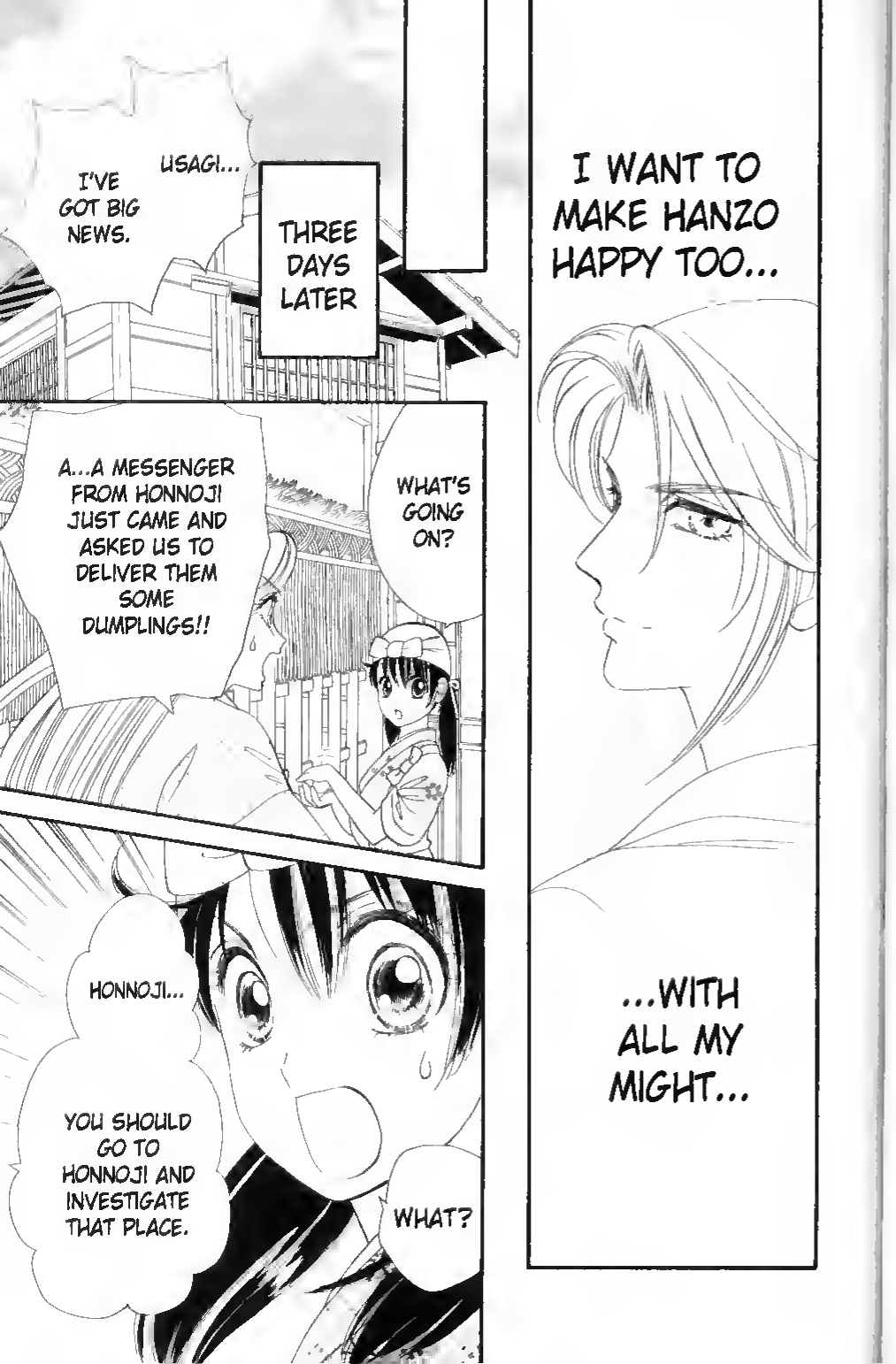

BOO
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS THE ONE WHO GETS GOEMON'S ATTENTION?!
THIS IS SO FRUSTRATING!
AAAH
YURI, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU TOMORROW...

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR HIM SMILING AT YOU JUST NOW?!
HE'S BEEN REALLY MEAN TO ME LATELY...
GOEMON WASN'T GIVING ME ATTENTION...


I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO A STUPID PERSON LIKE YOU ANYMORE!!
HUH... WAS HE SMILING?

...
ZZZ...

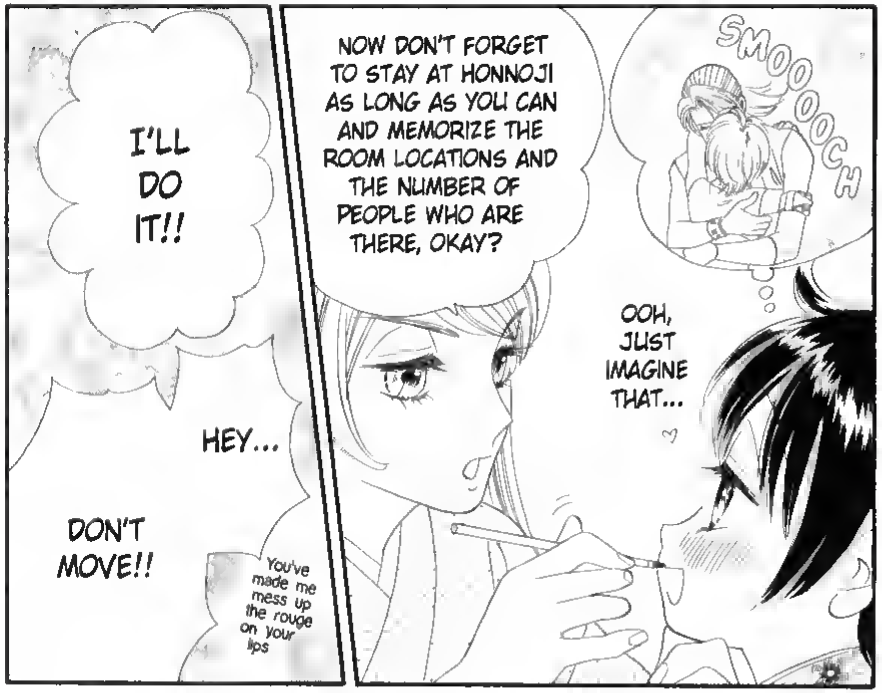
BUT...
YURI... I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
YES, SIR! ♡
GOEMON...
I'LL BE BACK.
DON'T WORRY.
SHHHK
OKAY...


USAGI...
I'VE GOT BIG NEWS.
THREE DAYS LATER
A...A MESSENGER FROM HONNOJI JUST CAME AND ASKED US TO DELIVER THEM SOME DUMPLINGS!!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HONNOJI...
YOU SHOULD GO TO HONNOJI AND INVESTIGATE THAT PLACE.
WHAT?
I WANT TO MAKE HANZO HAPPY TOO...
...WITH ALL MY MIGHT...

SNIK
HANZO...
I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING RIGHT NOW?
"...AND MAKE YOU HAPPY, USAGI."
"I WILL SURVIVE THE COMING HARD-SHIPS..."

...THAT MY LOVELY BRIDE-ELECT FULFILLED!!
WHAT AN AMAZING ACCOMPLISH-MENT...
I CAN'T BELIEVE USAGI DID A RECONNAISSANCE OF HONNOJI!!

OH, HANZO. ♡
NOW YOU CAN BE QUALIFIED AS A NINJA. ALL WE'VE GOT LEFT IS THE WEDDING.


I'LL DO IT!!
HEY...
DON'T MOVE!!
You've made me mess up the rouge on your lips
NOW DON'T FORGET TO STAY AT HONNOJI AS LONG AS YOU CAN AND MEMORIZE THE ROOM LOCATIONS AND THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE THERE, OKAY?
SMOOOCH
OOH, JUST IMAGINE THAT... ♡

JUST DISGUISE YOURSELF SO THAT HE WON'T RECOGNIZE YOU. ♪
...RANMARU MIGHT BE AT HONNOJI...
BUT...
PAT
DISGUISE?!
YOU GO, YURI.
NO WAY!
I HAVE TO SERVE THE CUSTOMERS AT THIS SHOP.

IF HANZO HEARS ABOUT THIS, I BET HE'LL PRAISE YOU FOR IT.
YES, BUT...
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET THIS ASSIGNMENT OVER WITH QUICKLY SO THAT YOU CAN RETURN TO IGA?
HANZO WILL?!

CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE HONNOJI IS?
EXCUSE ME...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
HUH?
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...WHERE EXACTLY IS HONNOJI, ANYWAY?!
TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
AAAGH, I'M SO NERVOUS...
COME ON, I CAN DO THIS...

YOU'RE STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF IT.
OH!

WHO ORDERED THEM?
HUH?
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
I...I CAME TO DELIVER DUMPLINGS...
UM...
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WELL, YOU HARDLY HAVE ANY CHARM SO I HAD TO MAXIMIZE WHAT FEW ASSETS YOU HAVE.
ISN'T THIS A LITTLE TOO SHOWY?
OW!
SLAP
JUST MAKE SURE YOU FULFILL YOUR ASSIGN-MENT.
MAYBE I LOOK STRANGE TO THEM.
EVERYBODY'S LOOKING AT ME...

...BUT HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO INVESTIGATE WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE...?
I'VE GOTTEN INSIDE HONNOJI...
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
IF RANMARU SEES ME, IT'S GOING TO RUIN EVERYTHING...

!!
YOU THERE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

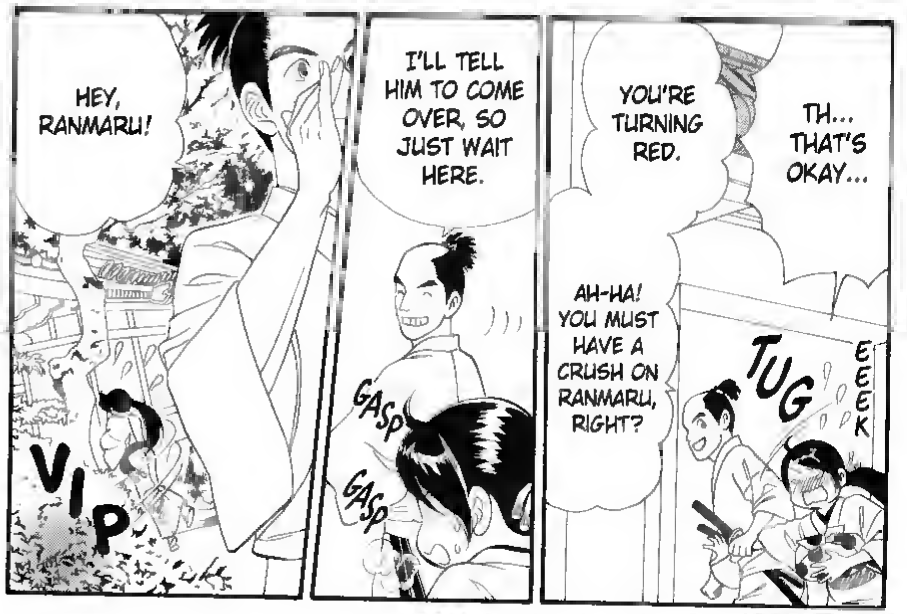
HEY, WAIT!!
TMP
DASH...
EEEEEEEK
AAARGH! IT'S THAT TEA BOWL GUY!!
WHERE HAVE I SEEN YOU BEFORE...?
HUH?

RAN...
OH, RANMARU.

COME ON, SPIT IT OUT.
I DON'T KNOW WHO...!!

THINK! THINK!
AND THEN THERE'S...
I can't say that Sada-whatever guy...
What was that nice person called?!
WHO'S HERE AGAIN?

I'LL GO GET HIM THEN.
NOT RANMARU...
OH!


HEY, RANMARU!
VIP
I'LL TELL HIM TO COME OVER, SO JUST WAIT HERE.
GASP
GASP
YOU'RE TURNING RED.
AH-HA! YOU MUST HAVE A CRUSH ON RANMARU, RIGHT?
TH... THAT'S OKAY...
TUG
EEEK

FWIP
YOU'RE...!!

YEAH, RIGHT!!
COME BACK HERE!!
OH, SHOOT!
!!
THUNK
WATCH OUT!
AAH!!
GRAB

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AS A TEACHER IN SCHOOL!"

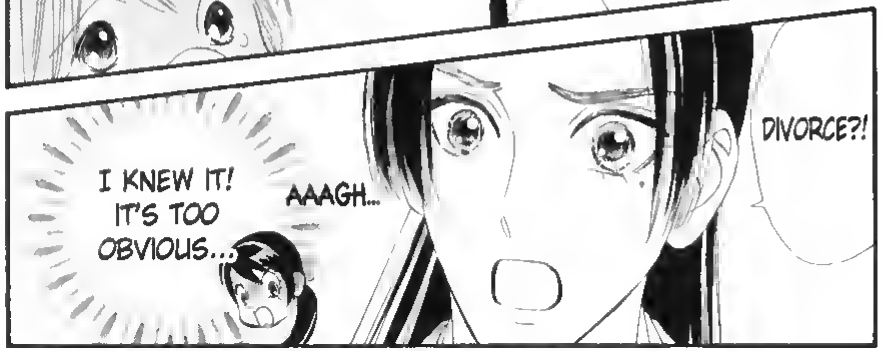
-TOMOPYON, HOKKAIDO

IF HANZO WAS MY HOMEROOM TEACHER, I'D NEVER GRADUATE, JUST SO I COULD SEE HIM EVERY DAY.
MY DREAM IS TO BECOME "MRS. HANZO HATTORI."
I'll be a ninth grader again
SHOCK
I...I'VE GOT A STUDENT REPEATING MY CLASS!!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

TMP
RANMARU...
TMP
YOU'RE...!!
STOP THAT SUSPICIOUS WOMAN!!
OH, NO.
TUG

SHE'S MY GIRLFRIEND.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SUSPICIOUS?
YOUR GIRL-FRIEND, RAN-MARU?!
GIRL-FRIEND?!
!
SHUP
YES.
PLEASE DON'T TELL LORD NOBUNAGA ABOUT IT.
JINGLE
LET'S GO TO MY ROOM FIRST.
RA... RANMARU ?!
VERY WELL...
I didn't see any-thing

I'M SORRY, HANZO...
JEEZ, IT SOUNDS LIKE A LIE, EVEN TO ME!
...I'VE DIVORCED HANBEI...AND I'M CURRENTLY RUNNING A DUMPLING SHOP HERE IN THE CAPITAL...
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...


I KNEW IT! IT'S TOO OBVIOUS...
AAAGH...
DIVORCE?!

THEN DID YOU MAKE THESE DUMPLINGS?
OH, THANK GOD!
TH... THAT'S RIGHT!!

RANMARU...
I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE TEA CEREMONY TOMORROW...
WE'LL HAVE THESE LATER THEN.
UH... UH-HUH!

SO THAT'S WHY YOU WERE HIDING YOUR FACE AT THE DUMPLING SHOP!!
WHA—?

KEE...
KEE!
MOSUKE?!

JOLT
SO IT IS YOU, USAGI. JUST AS I SUSPECTED.

OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO!
I THOUGHT YOU WENT BACK TO OKAZAKI. WHY ARE YOU AT THE CAPITAL?
OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO OH NO!

WHAT'S WRONG?
KEE?
OHHH...
OH...

OH... OKAY...
SKRATCH SKRATCH
THEN PLEASE WRITE THE INGREDIENTS DOWN.
I'LL HAVE THEM FETCHED.
I...I DON'T USE REGULAR TEA LEAVES FOR THAT TEA...

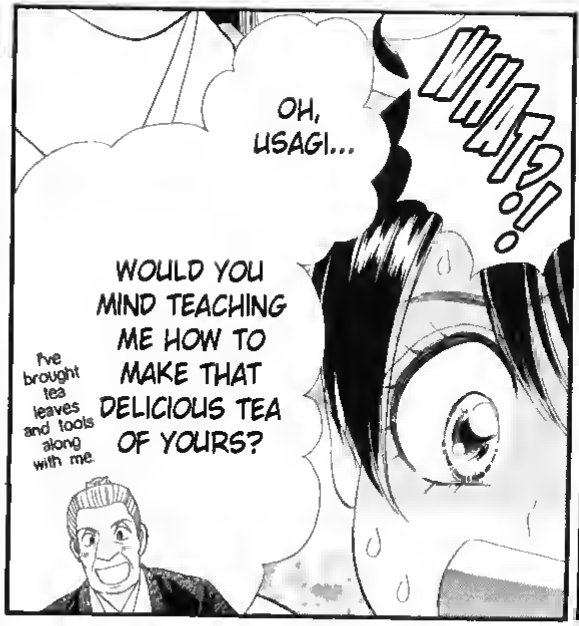
BUT...
PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR A WHILE.
I'LL GO AND HAVE THESE PREPARED RIGHT AWAY!

OH.
ZWAK

WSP
WSP
THIS ATTACK ON IGA...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT?

IT'S THAT BITTER OLD MAN WHO LIKES TEA!!
OH?

OH! IS SHE GOING TO BE ATTENDING LORD NOBUNAGA'S TEA CEREMONY TOMORROW?
MASTER RIKYU... REMEMBER USAGI? YOU MET HER BACK IN AZUCHI.


OH, USAGI...
WOULD YOU MIND TEACHING ME HOW TO MAKE THAT DELICIOUS TEA OF YOURS?
I've brought tea leaves and tools along with me.
HUH?!

TEA CEREMONY ?!
YES.
WE FINALLY GET TO HAVE HER MEET LORD NOBUNAGA.

JUST WHEN...
WE'LL ALL BE KILLED!!
IF THEY ATTACK US FROM ALL FOUR DIRECTIONS, WE'LL NEVER WIN.
...I FINALLY CONNECTED WITH HANZO...
GRAB

WE DIDN'T SUCCEED LAST TIME, SO HE'S GOING TO TRY AND WIN THIS BATTLE AT ALL COSTS.
I'VE HEARD THAT IT'S GOING TO BE LED BY LORD NOBUKATSU.
PRESS ATTACK ON IGA?!
KEE?
I HEARD THAT WE'RE GOING TO ATTACK FROM ALL FOUR DIRECTIONS.
...OTOGI TOUGE.
I'VE GOT TO WRITE THESE NAMES DOWN!
...LET'S SEE...
FROM AOYAMA TOUGE, TAMATAKIGUCHI, KASAMAGUCHI AND...
THAT'S RIGHT...

I CAN'T WRITE PROPERLY WITH MY HANDS SHAKING!!
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
AOYAMA TO

YES, SIR.
WE HAVE A GUEST FOR DINNER, SO PLEASE PREPARE ONE MORE MEAL.
TMP
TMP
DUMP
DUMP

I'M GOING TO PROTECT HANZO!!
...AND EVERYBODY ELSE AT IGA... I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO PROTECT THEIR HAPPINESS.
...MAMEZO...
GREAT-GRANDPA, GRANDPA...
...SO WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE AND HAVE DINNER WITH US?
YE... YES?
IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME FOR ALL THE TEA INGREDIENTS TO BE READY...
ZWAK
NOW'S THE TIME TO DO MY BEST...
USAGI.

I'M GOING TO GO TO BED.
YEAH...
MITSU-HIDE...
YOU'RE NOT FEELING WELL?
I'm not too fond of fried food
COULD YOU EAT MINE TOO THEN?

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
HE MUST STILL BE SHAKEN FROM BEING CRITICIZED BY LORD NOBUNAGA YESTERDAY.

...IS IT TRUE THAT THE SCAR ON HIS FOREHEAD IS FROM BEING ATTACKED BY LORD NOBUNAGA?
JUST FOR THAT?!
LORD NOBUNAGA WAS ENRAGED WHEN MITSUHIDE DIDN'T PICK UP THE GRAIN OF RICE LORD NOBUNAGA HAD DROPPED ON THE FLOOR...
THAT'S RIGHT.

IT'S RUDE TO BUTT IN ON OTHER PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS...
MASTER RIKYU...
HUH?

...WHEN DID YOU AND RANMARU BECOME LOVERS?
BY THE WAY, USAGI...

PEOPLE'S MINDS CAN CHANGE VERY EASILY.
BUT ONLY A WHILE AGO, USAGI WAS...

USAGI, DON'T YOU LIKE THE FOOD?
THIS CRISPY THING'S REALLY DELICIOUS!!
NO, I DO.
IT'S A WESTERN DISH CALLED TEMPURA.
CRNCH
CRNCH
SADANARI MURAI. MITSUHIDE AKECHI.
I'VE LEARNED THEIR NAMES AT LAST.
NOW THAT I'M IN THIS SITUATION, I'M GOING TO DO AS MUCH INVESTIGATING AS POSSIBLE !!
IT'S PROBABLY SOMETHING A DEVOTED HUSBAND LIKE MITSUHIDE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

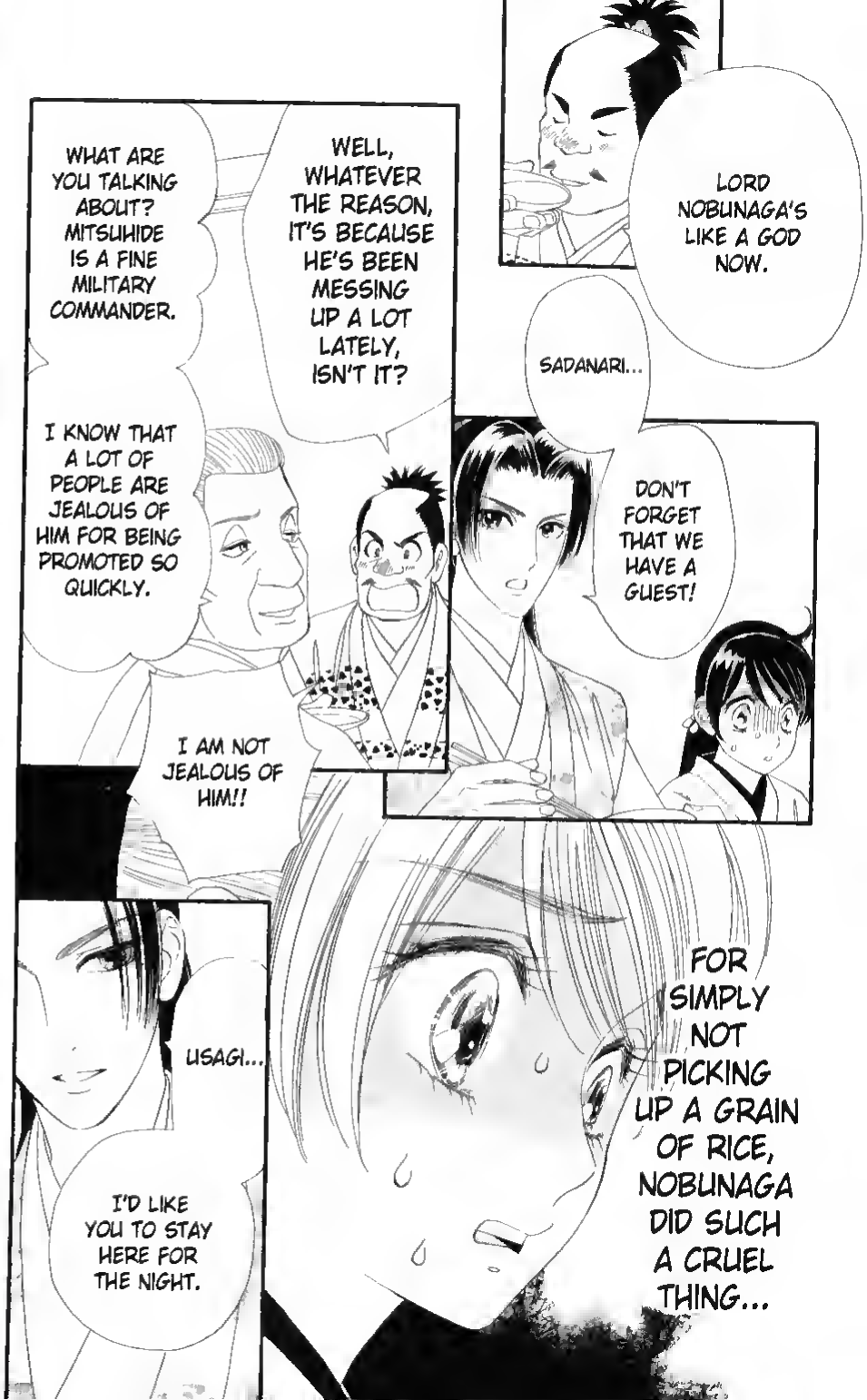
UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (15)

Back then, household fax machines, convenience stores, and door-to-door delivery service weren't that common. That's why I would photocopy my storyboard at the local stationery store (It was expensive!) for 30 yen per page, send it by express mail, and wait for a reply to come. Unfortunately, the reply from the editor always took a long time. I kept worrying, thinking things like, "Maybe it didn't reach them because of some accident." Even though I wanted to call to see if my storyboard got there okay, I was kind of scared and embarrassed.

(I never did call them in the end.)

The long waiting time felt like such a waste of time to me.

AND WE'VE GOT THAT TEA CEREMONY TOMORROW, SO WE SHOULD PROBABLY HEAD TO BED.
YOU SEEM TO BE AWFULLY TIRED...
HUH?!
TUG
IT'S A PRIVILEGE THAT ONLY THE YOUNG GET.
I WISH I WAS YOUNG AGAIN.
TCH
BU...BUT I REALLY CAN'T...
I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP HERE...
WAAH


LORD NOBUNAGA'S LIKE A GOD NOW.
SADANARI...
WELL, WHATEVER THE REASON, IT'S BECAUSE HE'S BEEN MESSING UP A LOT LATELY, ISN'T IT?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? MITSUHIDE IS A FINE MILITARY COMMANDER.
I KNOW THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE JEALOUS OF HIM FOR BEING PROMOTED SO QUICKLY.
DON'T FORGET THAT WE HAVE A GUEST!
I AM NOT JEALOUS OF HIM!!
USAGI...
I'D LIKE YOU TO STAY HERE FOR THE NIGHT.
FOR SIMPLY NOT PICKING UP A GRAIN OF RICE, NOBUNAGA DID SUCH A CRUEL THING...

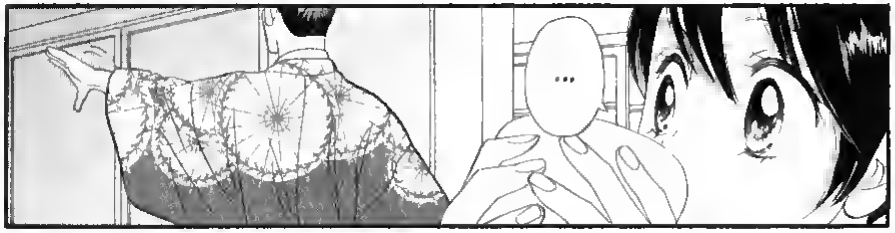
WE'RE LOVERS.
WHY NOT?
YOU'RE EVEN CUTER WHEN YOU BLUSH. ♡
TUG
BUT WE'RE FAKE LOVERS, RIGHT?!
JUST KIDDING. ♪
GIL...?!
HE REALLY SCARED ME THERE...
GASP GASP
DON'T FORGET TO BLOW OUT THE LIGHT BEFORE YOU GO TO SLEEP.
I'LL SLEEP WITH MOSUKE.
KEE.

GUGU
GUGU
THAT IDIOT.
WHY HASN'T SHE COME BACK YET?!
OOH
ZWAK
WAIT 'TIL I GET MY HANDS ON HER!
SHOCK
BUT I CAN'T DO THAT...
VUP
THIS IS MOSUKE'S FUTON, SO WE'LL USE THAT FUTON TOGETHER...
KEE.
I...I'M GOING TO BE SLEEPING NEXT TO YOU, RANMARU?

I'M SORRY I ASKED YOU TO EAT MY PORTION AS WELL.
TEMPURA IS A DELICACY, BUT IT IS RATHER HEAVY FOR THE STOMACH...
TP
WELL...MY STOMACH HURTS, SO I WAS GOING TO TAKE SOME MEDICINE...
IT MUST BE THE TEMPURA.
HERE, I'LL POUR YOU SOME WATER.
HEY...
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR EYES?
MITSUHIDE...
YOU'RE SPILLING IT...
AAH!
SPLASH

I NEED TO TAKE SOME MEDICINE...
THAT TEMPURA WAS REALLY GOOD, BUT I ATE TOO MUCH OF IT...
MY STOMACH HURTS TOO...
RUSTLE
HOW CAN I POSSIBLY SLEEP IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS?!
I'M TOO NERVOUS TO FALL ASLEEP.
OH.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
WHY ARE YOU UP SO LATE?
A LIGHT...
MAYBE THIS IS THE KITCHEN?

THANK YOU.
THEN I CAN TAKE IT WITHOUT ANY WORRIES.
GOOD NIGHT...
PHEW
I'M GLAD HE'S HAPPY.
AN HERBALIST FOR LORD IEYASU?!
UH... UH-HUH...
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT...?!

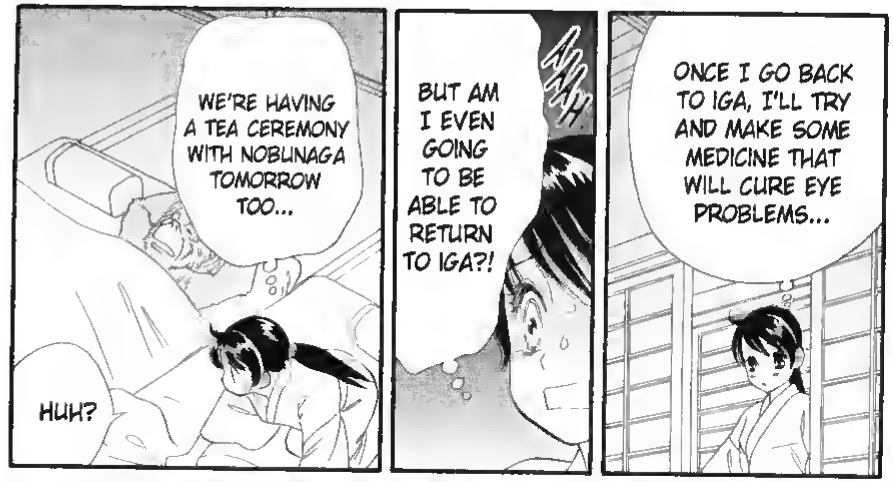

...

BUT WE'RE NOT REALLY LOVERS...
BUT...
YOU SHOULD RETURN TO YOUR ROOM QUICKLY TOO.
RANMARU WILL BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I CAN TAKE YOU TO YOUR ROOM IF YOU WANT.
MITSUHIDE'S EYES SEEM TO BE PRETTY BAD.
THERE'S NO NEED.

SORRY... I'VE BEEN TRYING NOT TO LET ANYONE FIND OUT ABOUT MY EYES...
AH! I'M SORRY...
SHIVER
SHIVER
DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS!!
TREMBLE

I MADE IT.
WHERE IS IT FROM?
IT RELIEVES FATIGUE, BUT IT ALSO HELPS REFRESH THE EYES...
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THIS MEDICINE?
I WAS AN HERBALIST FOR LORD IEYASU FOR A SHORT TIME...
YOU DID?

I WAS WORRIED SINCE YOU WEREN'T AROUND WHEN I WOKE UP.
STOP JOKING AROUND!!
IS IT THAT MUCH FUN TO TEASE ME?
...
?!
RANMARU ?!
IT'S NOT FUN AT ALL.


WE'RE HAVING A TEA CEREMONY WITH NOBUNAGA TOMORROW TOO...
HUH?
BUT AM I EVEN GOING TO BE ABLE TO RETURN TO IGA?!
AHH
ONCE I GO BACK TO IGA, I'LL TRY AND MAKE SOME MEDICINE THAT WILL CURE EYE PROBLEMS...

WHERE DID RANMARU GO...?

HUG
EEEEK!

...MISS KUNOICHI FROM IGA.
THE NOTE I WROTE ABOUT THE ATTACK ON IGA!!
DANGLE
I FOUND THIS ON THE FLOOR.
KASA OTOGI TO
IF SOMEBODY ELSE HAD FOUND THIS...
...YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN...
...DEAD BY NOW...
CRUMPLE

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 56

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN SCHOOLWEAR!"

-KIMIKA, HOKKAIDO

I WISH I COULD BE IN THE SAME CLASS AS HIM SO I COULD CALL HIM "HATTORI-KUN."
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
DO YOU THINK IT'S BECAUSE I'M A FATHERLY FIGURE TO THEM?
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU ACT LIKE AN OLD MAN.
MY CLASSMATES HAVE NICKNAMED ME "DAD."
TROMP TROMP

ZWAK
USAGI IS AT THE CAPITAL?!
!!
DIDN'T YOU GET ANYTHING FROM USAGI? SHE'S AT THE CAPITAL, AFTER ALL.
SUZUNE...
HOW LARGE WILL THE ARMY BE, AND WHEN WILL THEY ATTACK?
I DON'T KNOW YET...

YOU AMATEUR...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT!
DIDN'T YOU KNOW, HANZO?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DON'T KEEP TRACK OF YOUR BRIDE-ELECT'S MOVEMENTS...
SHE'S WORKING AS A KUSA, POSING AS GOEMON'S WIFE AT A TEAHOUSE NEAR HONNOJI.

...BUT THEY HAVE ACCEPTED THE ROLE OF LEADING THE ARMY DOWN TO IGA.
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BE PARTICI-PATING IN THE BATTLE ITSELF...
THE KOUGA NINJA ARE TAKING PART IN THE ATTACK AS WELL...?

THEY WERE SCARED THAT THEY'D MEET THE SAME FATE AS IGA IF THEY DIDN'T COOPERATE...

I'VE NEVER MET A NINJA AS CARELESS AS YOU.
GASP
RIP
RIP
THIS IS SUCH OBVIOUS PROOF...
YOU NOTICED BACK THEN?!
BUT YOU'VE BEEN CARELESS FROM THE FIRST TIME WE MET, BACK AT AZUCHI...
EH?
NEVERTHELESS, YOU'RE STILL GOING TO MAKE TEA FOR LORD NOBUNAGA TOMORROW.
IF HE KNEW I WAS A NINJA FROM IGA ALL THIS TIME, WHY DIDN'T HE KILL ME...?
YES.

HMMMPH
...
HANZO?
ZZZ
DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICE.
YOU'RE GOING TO WAKE MOSUKE UP.
NOD
NOD
IF YOU PROMISE ME THAT YOU WON'T YELL, I'LL TAKE MY HAND AWAY.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?!
"DON'T FORGET YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS."
IS HE GOING TO KILL ME IF I TRY TO RUN?!
BUT I HAVE TO TAKE THAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATTACK BACK TO IGA.
WHAT SHOULD I DO, HANZO?!

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM MAKING ANY STUPID MOVES.
BOOSH
AAAH
DON'T FORGET...
...YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.
VUP
WELL THEN, GOOD NIGHT.

HOW RUDE OF YOU!
ALL OF THESE PLANTS ARE HARMLESS.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, USAGI?!
RI... RIGHT.
OH!
THIS HERB!!
IS...IS THERE SOMETHING BAD...?
NOT AT ALL.
I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE THE USUAL TEA WITH THESE.
I'M GOING DOWN TO GET LORD NOBUNAGA, SO PLEASE TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING ELSE.

USAGI...
I'VE PREPARED THE THINGS YOU NEED FOR YOUR TEA!!
TH...
...THANK YOU...
MASTER RIKYU...
THERE ISN'T ANYTHING STRANGE MIXED WITH THESE HERBS, IS THERE?
USAGI, YOUR EYES ARE RED. DIDN'T YOU GET ANY SLEEP?
Y... YEAH.
A LITTLE...

I CAN'T LET THEM FIND OUT!!
Y...YOU'RE GOING TO INTERFERE WITH THE FLAVOR OF THE TEA, SO DON'T TOUCH IT!
OUCH...
PLEASE DO...
OH...
OF COURSE...
THEN I'M GOING TO HAVE TO VISIT YOUR SHOP "USAGI" EVERY DAY.
CAN IT BE...
...THAT YOUR TEA TASTES DIFFERENT EACH TIME?!

...AND RETURN TO HANZO'S SIDE!!

I MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF THIS SITUATION...

SHHHK

THIS IS REALLY ENCOURAG-ING...

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, USAGI!!

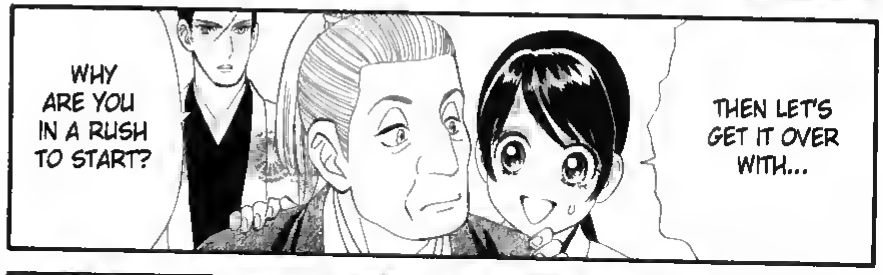
SHUNK
UM...
AREN'T WE GOING TO START THE TEA CEREMONY?

IF RANMARU KNOWS THAT I'M A NINJA, THEN HE KNOWS ABOUT THE SHOP TOO!!
YURI'S ALL ALONE AT THE SHOP!
CLOSED TEMPORARY
Usagi
OH, THEY'RE CLOSED TODAY...
WHAT A PITY.

LET'S DO IT.
WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT THE HOST, CAN WE...
I'VE ALREADY MADE THE TEA FOR THIS OCCASION...
...AND THERE ARE A LOT OF GUESTS WAITING...
HE SAID HE WON'T ATTEND BECAUSE "THE WIND IS BLOWING FROM THE SOUTHEAST THIS MORNING."
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
THEN WHAT ABOUT THE CEREMONY?

WOOOOO
HMM...
ICHIJO NO KIMI...
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S RATHER RUDE OF THE HOST TO BE ABSENT WHEN HE ASKED US TO ATTEND A TEA CEREMONY OUTSIDE ON A COLD DAY LIKE THIS?

WE HAVE SOME NOBLES ATTENDING THIS EVENT, SO WE REALLY CAN'T POSTPONE IT EITHER...
OH...
WE CAN'T START UNTIL LORD NOBUNAGA ARRIVES.


WHY ARE YOU IN A RUSH TO START?
THEN LET'S GET IT OVER WITH...

BECAUSE IT'S BETTER WITHOUT NOBUNAGA OR RANMARU AROUND!!
UM... I... UH...
LORD NOBUNAGA WILL NOT BE ATTENDING THE TEA CEREMONY TODAY.
TMP TMP
I'M VERY SORRY.
WHAT?!

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (16)

The reply from the editor came after 2-3 weeks, but (all the parts that were pointed out) after re-drawing, I had to wait for the next response to come again. I couldn't bear all that waiting anymore, so I decided to send my manga to other publishers.

As for how that turned out... check out the next volume!

Send your messages and letters to the following address. We're looking forward to your requests for the Extra Missions as well!

Rinko Ueda
C/O Shojo Beat
Viz Media
P.O Box 77010
San Francisco, CA
94107

Rinko Ueda

HERE YOU ARE. DRINK IT WHILE IT'S STILL HOT.
I'M SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING.
COUGH
HRMM...
YOU'VE BEEN UNUSUALLY SILENT TODAY, ICHIJO NO KIMI.

IT'S A TEA MADE BY THAT GIRL USAGI OVER THERE.
...BUT SHE'S RANMARU MORI'S GIRLFRIEND.
PHOOT
WELL, THIS IS JUST BETWEEN US NOW...
AND WHO IS SHE?

WILL YOU FEED IT TO ME MOUTH TO MOUTH?
MOUTH...?
USAGI...
HUH?
GUSH
O...
...OKAY!!

YOU SHOULD TRY SOME, RANMARU.
THE NOBLES SEEM TO LIKE YOUR TEA.

JU...
JUST GIVE IT A TRY...
I'LL HAVE SOME LATER.

SADA-NARI... IT'S TOO EARLY TO START YAWNING.
HAAAH...
IT TASTES THE BEST WHEN IT'S FRESHLY BREWED...

IF YOU SAY SO...
SADA-NARI...
DRINK THIS WHILE IT'S STILL HOT...
I SUDDENLY FEEL SLEEPY...

!!
CRASH
SHOVE
I...I FEEL SO... SLEEPY...
SWAY
SWAY
ZZZ
ZZZ
YOU TWO...
...NOT IN FRONT OF THE...
...GUESTS...
DID THE TEA...?!
WHAT DID YOU...
DIZZY
COME BACK HERE!!
DASH

MMMMM
WHA...
WHAT'S WRONG, SADANARI?!
THUD
ZZZ
SHATTER
ZZZ
NGH...

YOU FOOL.
BE QUIET!
AHH
NOOO
SWAY
SWAY
ICHIJO NO KIMI...
...DON'T LET GO OF THAT GIRL...
FLUP
!!

SOMEBODY CAPTURE THAT GIRL!!
I HAVE TO GO BACK AND TELL HANZO...
I HAVE TO GO BACK.
TUG

HANZO...!!
TO BE CONTINUED...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME NOT TO LET GO OF USAGI.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...

Page 96, panel 1: **Enryakuji**
Enryakuji is a famous temple on Mt. Hiei and was a significant symbol of Buddhism at the time. Because the Buddhists did not obey Nobunaga, he burned the temple to the ground in 1571, killing 20,000-30,000 men, women, and children in the process.

Page 114, panel 3: **Mitsuhide Akechi**
Mitsuhide Akechi became one of Oda Nobunaga's retainers after Nobunaga's conquest of Mino province (now Gifu prefecture) in 1566. Akechi is known to have been more of an intellectual and a pacifist than a warrior.

Page 123, panel 4: **Sakai**
Sakai is a city in Osaka prefecture that is one of the largest and most important seaports in Japan. Once known for samurai swords, Sakai is now famous for quality kitchen knives and other cutlery.

Page 142, panel 2: **Sen no Rikyu**
Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591) is famous for having a huge influence on the Japanese tea ceremony, particularly in wabi-cha (a style that emphasizes simplicity). Rikyu became tea master for Oda Nobunaga when he was 58 years old.

Page 148, panel 6: **Tempura**
Although tempura is now considered a classic Japanese dish, it was Portuguese missionaries who first introduced this batter-coated deep fried delicacy to Japan during the 16th century.

Page 161: **Kunoichi**
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled く ノ 一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女。

Page 163: **Plus Alpha**
In Japanese, "plus alpha" is used to amplify something. For example, if someone asks you how busy your work is, you might reply, "I'm pretty busy right now. I've got my usual stuff to do plus alpha on the side."

Page 38, panel 3: **Rubia Akane**
Rubia Akane is a plant that can be found in the mountains of Japan. Its root is used in Chinese and Japanese medicine to heal anemia, stop bleeding, etc. It is also used in cloth dyeing, as it has an orange yellow color when the root is dried.

Page 58: **Ryo**
Ryo is the title character of Rinko Ueda's manga series *Ryo*. The story features Saito Musashibo Benkei and Minamoto no Yoshitsune, two popular characters from Japanese history.

Page 58: **Juni-hitoe**
A juni-hitoe is a very elegant and complex kimono worn by court ladies in Japan. The name literally translates into "twelve-layer robe," and it can weigh up to 20 kilograms.

Page 68, panel 2: **Kami no Hanzou**
The term *kami no* means "the Upper," and can refer to social status. However, since Hanzou is a member of a branch family, it is very unlikely that his status is higher than that of the head of the entire clan, Hanzo. The term *kami no* can also refer to geographic location in relation to an important city center, such as the capital. Hanzou is from Okazaki, which is closer to Edo than Hanzo's home in Segachi.

Page 77, panel 1: **Ninjutsu**
Ninjutsu means the skill or ability of a ninja.

Page 84: **Guitar Samurai**
Guitar Samurai is a TV character played by Japanese comedian Yoku Hata. He appears in a man's kimono with a guitar and sings a song that usually makes fun of a famous celebrity. After imitating the celebrity, Guitar Samurai finishes by saying, "Slash!" Yoku Hata also uses the phrase "Isn't that what people say?" in his puns.

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 8, panel 4: **Tokugawa Ieyasu**
Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) was the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. He made a small fishing village named Edo the center of his activities. Edo thrived and became a huge town and was later renamed Tokyo, the present capital.

Page 9, panel 4: **Iga**
Iga is a region on the island of Honshu and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Kouga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories might suggest.

Page 15, panel 5: **Manga School**
"Manga School" is a section in Japanese manga magazines for people who want to become manga artists. Participants who receive high scores for their sample manga submissions get an award along with a chance to make their debut in the magazine.

Page 23, panel 3: **Castella**
Castella is a type of sponge cake made from sugar, flour, eggs, and starch syrup. This sweet was brought over to Japan by Portuguese merchants and was originally called "pão de Castella" (meaning "bread from Castile").

Page 32: **Benkei**
Benkei is a character from Rinko Ueda's manga series *Ryo*. He is based on the Japanese historical figure Saito Musashibo Benkei, who is known for his strength and loyalty.

Page 2: **Shimo no Hanzo**
Shimo no means "the Lower," and in this case refers to Hanzo's geographic location rather than social status.

Page 2: **Azuchi**
Azuchi is by Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, where Oda Nobunaga built his castle and the town that were the center of his operations.

Page 2: **Oda Nobunaga**
Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle and is notorious for his ruthlessness.

Page 2: **Okazaki**
Okazaki is in Aichi Prefecture on the main island of Honshu, about 22 miles from Nagoya.

Page 6: **Matsuken Samba and Abarenbo Shogun**
The song "Matsuken Samba" was a big hit around 2005; it's sung by Japanese actor Ken Matsudaira ("Matsuken" is derived from combining the first syllable of his last name "Matsu" with his first name "Ken.") Ken Matsudaira is also famous for his role in a TV series called *Abarenbo Shogun*.

Usagi wasn't good at anything in the beginning, but lately she's been acting more like a kunoichi (which is something even I never expected to see). In addition, Hanzo seems to be becoming more human. I really enjoy showing these small changes. Usagi's encounter with Ranmaru has brought a big turning point in this story, so please continue to follow the adventures of Usagi and her friends.

–Rinko Ueda

Rinko Ueda is from Nara prefecture. She enjoys listening to the radio, drama CDs, and Rakugo comedy performances. Her works include *Ryo*, a series based on the legend of Gojo Bridge, *Home*, a story about love crossing national boundaries, and *Toil of the Moon (Tsuki no Shippo)*, a romantic ninja comedy.